

**Emotions in classroom microsituations:  
a sociocultural perspective**

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## **Abstract**

The central argument of this thesis is that a sociocultural approach, based on Vygotsky's work, allows embracing simultaneously both the individual and the social aspects of emotions.

The thesis comprises two parts. Sociological and psychological literatures about the study of emotions are reviewed to show the difficulties that these disciplines have faced in accounting for both the physiological and the cultural aspects of emotions simultaneously. In the first part of the thesis, I build an all-embracing historical psychological approach that pulls together aspects of Vygotsky's work in order to overcome those difficulties. In so doing, my investigation of what emotions 'are' has changed to acknowledge the need to investigate what emotions 'do' in social contexts and interactions. The study of emotions, I argue, needs to avoid their separation from the context in which they emerge to overcome the separation of individual and social aspects of emotions.

The second part of this thesis consists of an exploration of the necessary traits for an adequate sociocultural study of emotions in the classroom. This involves the analysis of emotions as they feature within pedagogic practices that take place in four classrooms, through a detailed examination of video-recorded microsituations. Three foci are constructed to discuss situated emotions: context, social practice and microhistory.

The empirical study offers the basis for two conclusions. First, through the data analysis I show diverse ways in which teachers accompany, encourage and 'contain' or 'regulate' emotions as part of the interactions that take place in classrooms. Second, I offer an outline of a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions which does not separate their individual and social aspects. Finally, I discuss some of the implications of this study for teachers' practices and for future research.

*To Flora Mabel Sánchez Pancardo (†) and José Humberto Joaquín Encinas Gasca,  
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## **Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar

Wanderer, there is no path, paths are made by walking.

–Antonio Machado, Proverbios y Cantares, 1912

## Preamble

Emotions have only been cursorily acknowledged in sociocultural research on classroom interaction and teacher development. Studies that do refer to emotions in the classroom or linked to the classroom do not consider how emotions play out in social contexts, and tend to portray emotions as solely or mostly individual, as mainly physiological or as commonly subjective responses to the environment (Hargreaves, 2004; Hargreaves, 2005a; Kelchtermans, 2005; Reio, 2005; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003; van Veen and Lasky, 2005). Indeed, emotions are typically treated as ‘lived’ internally, ‘inside the skin’ (Damasio, 1999) and reactively activated by stimulus from ‘the world’. In the case of teachers, for example, emotions have been studied mainly through interviews that explore individuals’ experiences of them. In this sense emotions have often been studied based on what is reported about them by different actors.

Heller defines emotions as “to be involved with something” (1979, p. 18). Her insight emphasises the process of *involvement*. However, her reference to the unspecific ‘something’ makes emotions still somehow ‘ethereal’ –de-contextualised– and thus, imprecise and difficult to research. By contrast, the reference to the link between emotions and social practices that is central to my conceptualisation of emotions implies the transformation of the ‘subject’ –the people and each person– simultaneously to the transformation of the ‘object’ –the world. The affect involved in human participation in social practices implies both of these transformative effects of practice. Again, my interest is in the social *emergence, working through* and *organisation* of emotions *in situ*, as lived, and worked through embodied practices.

Emotions are considered an important element in human engagement and participation in social practices and social relationships. In particular, in everyday life in schools, including secondary schools, emotions are frequently mentioned by teachers and they are often linked to motivation, particularly to students’ motivation to learn (Wentzel, Wigfield and Miele, 2009). In this sense, an ‘emotional’ element is often acknowledged in everyday life in schools, but rarely studied in detail. As a working definition, I understand emotion as *the affect involved in human participation in social practices and*



*thus, simultaneously, in relation to the transformation of the world and in relation to the interactions with others.* I am constructing a methodological approach from a cultural and historical perspective, which I will call sociocultural. I am interested in using Vygotsky's work to study emotions as situated, i.e. as part of social practices.

One of the implications of other studies of emotions that do not take social practices as the departure point is that emotions are converted into an 'epiphenomenon', something that is foreign to social practices: something functioning which runs independently of practices, rather than *during* and as part of them. It is interesting to observe, by contrast, that the individual and subjective character of other aspects of the human 'personality' has been lengthily questioned. These aspects include cognition (Abraham, 1998; Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1996; Engeström and Middleton, 1998; Hutchins, 1995; Lave, 1988; Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989), gender (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Jaggar and Bordo, 1989; Reay, 2004; Williams and Bendelow, 1998b), and lately age (Andrew, 2007).

All in all, emotions continue to be left aside in most sociocultural research. In this thesis my aim is to move beyond the treatment of emotions as 'internal' 'and 'subjective' phenomena, and to show that the separation between individual and social aspects of emotions leads to an impasse. I argue that emotions need to be simultaneously understood as individual and social, without dealing with them as if both aspects were the same. My research aims to bring together some theoretical elements offered by Vygotsky in his psychological research in order to build a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions. Such an approach needs to frame the individual-social relationship not as two separate entities but as co-constructed. An embracing approach, consequently, understands the individual and, concurrently, the social character of emotions. In so doing, emotions and contexts cannot be split from each other either but are acknowledged as co-constructed too.

In the last three decades, the emotional turn (Clough, 2007; Cromby, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Koivunen, 2001; Peacock, 2009; Roth, 2011; Woodward, 1996), has permeated a number of social disciplines. In spite of this recent burgeoning of studies about emotions, it is not yet clear in psychology how to study emotions without treating them as phenomena that take place 'inside the skin', which is related to the study of their physiology. Research on emotions from a sociocultural perspective is even more recent (Ferholt, 2009; Marjanovic-Shane *et al.*; Roth, 2004; Roth, 2007b, p. 87; Roth, 2011;

Valkanova, Jackson and Watts, 2004). A number of issues need to be sorted out to break through with alternatives to our common sense understanding of emotions. Common sense, for example, does not start by addressing the dynamic relationships between the situated character of thinking and emotions.

Vygotsky's study about emotions was never completed in spite of his early interest in the relationship between emotions and art (Vygotsky, 1971), and notwithstanding his review about the study of emotions in later years (Vygotsky, 1987b and 1999). There are two possible reasons for this fact. Firstly, he needed to engage in a number of practical problems that the Soviet Union was facing, such as massive illiteracy, the support of people with cultural differences and the education of individuals with special needs (Wertsch, 1988). Those problems seemed to be the foci of his approach towards the construction of the new society.

Additionally, it can be argued that other aspects of psychological research had to be in place before Vygotsky could embark on a discussion about emotions. In particular, it was necessary to have a clearer understanding of the role of language as a symbolic tool and as a 'functional barrier' between the sensory field and the motor system (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 35) and, more generally, a clearer elaboration on the relation between thinking and speech and on the role of consciousness in his psychological system (Vygotsky, 1925/1999). All these issues were important because, as he states, the main problem about emotions is not the relation between body and soul, but between emotions and thinking (Vygotsky, 1999), between understanding and passion, between reasoning and emotional elements in our cognitive powers, and more generally in our mental life. This represented a change of focus of the struggle to capture what is at stake in relation to the study of emotions. Furthermore, thinking, 'understanding' and cognition, needed to be understood as embedded in the social world. Eventually, these changes in perspective entail the potential to lead to an approach that differs from the dominant psychological perspectives that study emotions, as I discuss in Chapter 3.

In this way although Vygotsky did not complete his work in relation to emotions, his seminal ideas (1999) offer two important theoretical elements to the development of psychology, which I bring together in this research as they can be fruitfully used for the study of emotions. On the one hand, emotions are part of the human mind, i.e. part of human life, and not a separate realm. Thus, emotions cannot be reducible to their physiological, 'universal' functioning. This means that emotions, as with all other

psychological aspects of personality, need to be understood in terms of their interplay with consciousness, and hence as part of participation in social practices. Vygotsky studied “the functioning, contradictions, and transformations between societal and individual forms of life” (Stetsenko, 2005, p. 73). Under this premise, his work challenged the main psychological systems at his time. This first aspect that I take from Vygotsky entails the study of emotions without splitting their study into multiple realms or aspects (i.e. studying them in the physiology of the body independently of the interpretation of emotions in a social and cultural context), but in a unified manner.

Vygotsky’s suggestion for the construction of a unified psychology is a fertile foundation on which a theoretical and methodological understanding of emotions can be built. He was pursuing the construction of a ‘general psychology’ that could address (1) ‘the mental’ and its properties, including the problem of consciousness, (2) human behaviour, and (3) the unconscious (Vygotsky, 1997a). Nevertheless, these three realms continue to be separated in different types of psychology. Vygotsky considered that a general psychology required a different approach to the construction of a psychological science where it was not viable just to mix consciousness, behaviour and the unconscious together (Vygotsky, 1997b). That discipline, a ‘general psychology, never emerged. However, I take from Vygotsky’s suggestion the idea of studying emotions based on the unity of the psychological phenomenon..

Vygotsky certainly did not reach firm conclusions about the study of emotions. His investigation on this topic was only a critical analysis of the current ‘teachings’ about emotions at his time (Vygotsky, 1999). In that review, he identifies the ways in which emotions should not be studied and establishes similar grounds to those that the construction of a unified psychological science would need to face. In this analysis, Vygotsky explains that emotions cannot be understood either materially (as physical, biological, and in the body), or ‘ideally’ (as experiential, phenomenological, and as part of an abstract mind). Following Spinoza (1993), he explains the need to study emotions without a separation between body and mind, because the two substrates are inseparable.

On the other hand, Vygotsky states the need to study psychological phenomena in a historical manner, in its genesis (for example in his research about concepts Vygotsky, 1987c). In relation to animal emotions, human emotions represent both a continuity and a breakage. For this reason, Vygotsky embraces a historical approach to the study of

human psychology (Scribner, 1985), emphasizing the fact that a fundamental aspect of humans and humanity is change and transformation. The change, in relation to human beings, however, does not only involve an unfolding from the past, but also a view loaded by intentions embedded in practice that involve potential futures. For this reason, I argue that for Vygotsky emotions needed to be studied with an integrated approach (Vygotsky, 1997b) that embraced all kinds of psychological phenomena, and these phenomena would need to be understood as part of human (cultural) history and from the perspective of the ever-changing humanised world. For this reason, historical understanding would have to take place at any level of the study of phenomena, even at the level of interactions. At this level, microhistorical analysis offers an appropriate methodology for the study of emotions.

### **A brief biography of my interests in emotions**

Although I began this thesis by undertaking an ethnographically-informed study of a Mexican secondary school with the aim of researching teachers' learning to use Information and Communications Technology at work, my object of study and my approach changed over time. During my analysis and reflections on the data that I had collected, I became increasingly aware of the importance of emotions in the classroom. Perhaps because of my background as a Gestalt psychotherapist and as an artist, the role that emotions played in classrooms had a bearing on my sensitivity to them as an issue. Thinking back, emotions had not been distant from my interests either during my time as a teacher, or in my work with teachers for several years, so when I became aware that emotions seemed to be important in the videos I was analysing, they became a central interest in my research. It was then that I decided to study emotions as they were 'happening' in the classroom, and to reflect on the issues involved in making emotions the focus of my study.

This significant change in my research interest was challenging for many reasons, not only in the need for reviewing new literature that allowed me to understand emotions as they were taking place in the social context of the classroom, but also I had to decide how to address this new issue in the data already gathered. Moreover, I realised that I was not satisfied with the theoretical approaches to the study of emotions I had found. In psychology, studies usually explained in great detail the 'universal' functioning of emotions (e.g. the 'basic' or 'primary' ones and the 'secondary' ones), and they did so in clear connection to the study of their physiological functioning. This implies the

study of emotions in a way that might be compared with the study of the functioning of the digestive system. In a symposium about emotions in education, for example, I was shocked when the discussant stated that he never thought he was going to talk about his dog in an educational conference. In his view, emotions are linked to our ‘animal’ or ‘non rational’ part. In the sociology of emotions literature, on the other hand, I felt that individuals were lost, as emotions were mostly built as meanings grounded in culture and that ‘the body’, and the individual, so much stressed in psychological perspectives, are so loaded with symbolic value that body and individuals are difficult to ‘grab’.

An important element of this exercise is that a theory built from what I call a sociocultural approach needs to demonstrate its value in practice. So, finding the elements suggested by Vygotsky to construct such an approach to the study of emotions, implied also to use them in the analysis of the data gathered in a Mexican secondary school. Through my discussion based on the data analysis, my aim is to reflect on how what I call a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions might work in practice to study emotions in action – in this case, in the action of the vibrant classrooms where teachers and adolescents interacted.

### **Rationale of the study**

By contrast with the challenges faced by Vygotsky, the issues that we need to face in contemporary psychology, and in educational psychology in particular, are situated in the context of a culturally diverse and globalised world. One of the central issues concerns the role of schools and the possibilities of school impact in social, economic and political terms; another one, the tensions arising from the recognition of diversity. In order to address these issues, I want to concentrate on the importance of schooling in terms of addressing issues of diversity, power relations, participation and collective learning. Currently, schools, and particularly secondary schools (for 12 to 15 year-olds, in the case of Mexico) seem not to be responding to young people’s needs and aspirations. It seems that schools struggle to embrace their diverse needs. Secondary schools seem to be facing an important challenge, which is to *bring adolescents in* (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004a; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004b) and this means to do it in a way in which they engage with their own learning. Teachers continuously (and maybe because they are engaged in everyday struggles) complain about discipline problems and students’ lack of motivation and interest in school. In order to deal with these sorts of problems, it has been suggested that we would need a

wider understanding of the role that school can have, and the way in which student participation could be not only accepted but encouraged (Fielding and Bragg, 2203; Howes and Davies, 2007; McEvoy and Lundy, 2007; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004a). I consider however, that an important aspect that needs to be understood is how emotions have a place in schools and far from being neglected, that they are acknowledged, without psychologising schools (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009).

Emotions in education offer a practical challenge to psychology, a discipline that deals with this object of study, but for which emotions, far from being studied as integrated phenomena, have been studied by different psychologies. Either emotions have been studied as physiological features by neurologists or as rich subjective psychological experiences that are dealt by counsellors or psychotherapists. The practical problem with both of these psychologies is that they do not address the study of emotion in an integrated approach. Integration would help understand emotions not only as an individual phenomenon, but simultaneously as a matter that needs to be addressed in social terms to account for diversity, and for individual and collective learning of the way in which working through emotions takes place. This would need to build a unified approach that deals simultaneously with the individual and the social aspects of emotions. For example, psychology would need to understand the ways in which emotions emerge in particular situations, how they are *shaped* by the context in which they emerge and their implication for individual students' experience implicated in their participation and learning in the classroom. I argue that Vygotsky's (1987b; 1997b; 1999) work is still relevant to this end.

The literature about emotions in psychology is commonly focused on an individual conception of the self (for example in terms of the literature in the field of Social and Emotional Learning: Hoffman, 2009), as I argue in Chapter 3. A jointly social and individual understanding of emotions can open possibilities for understanding the complexities of the problems being faced in secondary schools in a broader sense. This understanding can inform decisions taken inside and outside schools. In this venture, my research focuses on the understanding of emotions as part and parcel of human practices. This understanding however, aims to end the dichotomy in which 'individual' and 'social' phenomena (emotions, in this case) are studied. I argue that such a separation constitutes a dichotomy, because of the way in which the object of study intertwines with the methods of study. The study of emotions, commonly tends to ignore the way in which individual and social aspects of emotions play together.

The theoretical and methodological challenge is “to dispel the centuries-old Cartesian dichotomies between human subjectivity and real life” (Stetsenko, 2005, p. 71). Vygotsky (1997b) suggests that Cartesian thinking has two sides (mind and body), and that it is easy to avoid one of them and fall into the other. My aim is to contribute to the construction of the basis for a theoretical approach by putting together two seminal ideas of Vygotsky’s work (unity and historicity) in order to find a methodological approach to the study of emotions without separating their individual and social aspects. As Stetsenko (2005) points out, Vygotsky embraces *real life*, i.e. life lived through participation in societal human practices, as the fundamental aspect through which psychological functioning can be understood. In this framework, it is not possible to understand the mind any more as a “solipsistic and individual phenomenon” (Stetsenko, 2005, p. 71). What is needed is the means by which to understand the dynamics between individuals and social aspects of human emotions. To study ‘the nature’ of emotions it is needed to study how emotions have come to be what they are in contemporary societies. I am not looking for an answer about the essence of emotions, but I aim to build towards the understanding of the functions of emotions in human life.

The study of emotions from a view in which their individual and social characters are split from each other cannot offer schools ways of dealing with emotions in order to support issues of experience and cultural diversity, of how to work through emotions, and of individual and collective learning in classrooms.

### **Emotions and pedagogic practices in the classroom from other approaches**

My intention now is to present an overview of the literature during the last two decades about emotions in relation to school classrooms. This section offers a ‘contrast surface’ that will be useful in Chapter 10 to assess the findings of the data analysis in terms of the construction of a theoretical approach for the study of emotions.

Research on teachers’ emotions is minimal in comparison to studies of teachers’ thinking and beliefs (Borko, 2004; Borko and Putnam, 1996; Richardson, 2003) and studies of ‘learning to teach’ (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003), both in pre-service teacher education, and in in-service teacher professional development. A rare acknowledgement of the importance of emotions comes from Day who asserts that “whilst change [through teaching] involves cognition, it is not only a cognitive process. It involves emotion” (Day, 1999p. 41). Sutton and Wheatley (2003) sustain that teachers’ emotions

are engaged through their cognition, motivation, and behaviour, and that emotions can have an important impact on students. Further, they propose several reasons why emotions should be studied, i.e. management and discipline, adopting and using new teaching strategies, learning to teach, and teacher motivation. Kelchtermans (2005) justifies the importance of emotions for understanding teaching practice by contending that emotions imply the embedded character of teachers' meaningful experiences while they interact in and with their professional environments. In this way, emotions express "what is at stake" for teachers (what is important for them) that stops emotions from being seen as a marginal phenomenon, when a change in practices takes place.

In spite of the acknowledgment of emotions by teachers, teacher-educators and researchers, it is common for the teaching profession is described as overly 'rational' (Moore, 2004) and oriented to a cognitive agenda. Recently, the focus on teaching standards has made these aspects stronger. Hargreaves comments that the recent focus on rationality and cognition could undermine "the very emotional understanding that is foundational to achieving and sustaining those standards" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 825). The study of teachers' emotions contributes to a "more appropriate theory building on teaching and educational reform" (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 996). Finally, research suggests that organisational conditions that structure interactions inside the school can "help or hinder emotional expression and understanding" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 824).

Moreover, in spite of the rich recollections that teachers have about their emotions while reflecting on their practices, what is known about teachers' emotions is still limited in comparison with other aspects of the profession. Ironically, emotions are as important a part of teaching as reflective practice (Van Manen, 1995). From Lortie's (1975) reference to and criticism of sentimentalism in the profession, to the studies pursued through interviewing teachers (for example Emmer and Stough, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000, 2001a, 2002b, 2004), the understanding of teachers' emotions and the way they are embedded in teachers' knowledge and practice has made little progress. As Sutton and Wheatley (2003) suggest, most of what is known about teachers' emotions has its origin in three main groups of studies: sociological studies of teachers (for example studies about emotional labour such as Johnson *et al.*, 2005; or indirectly, in classical studies such as Lortie, 1975), studies related to school changes and reform (Bascia and Hargreaves, 2000; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Hargreaves, 1998a; Hargreaves, 2001b; Hargreaves, 2002b), and psychological studies about teachers (Emmer and Stough, 2001; Sutton, 2007; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003).



However, the dynamics of emotions, particularly when considered as embedded in teachers' practices, and in teachers' knowledge, offers more questions than answers. The main findings so far present emotions as 'feelings'. In this way, emotions are defined as subjective appreciations, and therefore are separated from the object of their activity which is what gives sense to the profession, i.e. students' learning. The limitation probably resides partly in the methodology used for their study, with interviews being used as the primary source for researchers in this area (Day and Leitch, 2001; Emmer and Stough, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998a; Hargreaves, 1998b; Hargreaves, 2002a; Hargreaves, 2005b; Hargreaves and Tucker, 1991; Van Manen, 1995). Accordingly, *mentalist* studies of emotions, emotions are detached from practices; emotions are assumed to be subjective and not embedded in practices. The counterpart of this approach is that both the emotions in the body and the emotions played out in the social realm are two separated phenomena: the physiological one, and the social one.

A social and emotional learning (SEL) approach to emotions in education is based on the assumption that interventions in the school are oriented to produce students' behaviours that are in agreement with the school functioning 'as it is'. Also, in this perspective, emotions need to be carefully delineated as discrete skills (Beecham et al., 2011; Cooper and Brna, 2002; DfES, 2007; Ragozzino et al., 2003). This compartmentalisation of emotions is necessary for their development through different techniques and strategies that can be followed in classrooms. However, even if effectiveness has been proved in the management of emotions in SEL programmes (for example in Zins, 2004; Zins *et al.*, 2007), as Hoffman (2009) suggests, the individualistic focus of this perspective fails to capture issues of particular relevance in the current school context such as power and participation, the strengthening of values and community, care and diversity, and the role of emotions in participation and learning in the classroom.

### **Focus of the study**

My first aim is to bring a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions so that their individual and social aspects are not separated from each other. I do this by drawing on Vygotsky's suggestions about the construction of a 'new' perspective: a unified approach to the study of psychological phenomena, which is also historically based (i.e. an approach to the ways in which human psychological phenomena change). My second

aim is to use and work this approach through an examination of emotions as part of studying participation in the pedagogic practices that take place in classrooms.

The ‘sociocultural’ approach I construct is actually informed directly by Vygotsky’s work, as well as from work developed in both sociocultural and cultural historical traditions that developed from his work. I discuss this issue in the final section of Chapter 3 together with the decision of naming my study sociocultural. Furthermore, I argue that the idea of a sociocultural approach is not outside the field of psychology, although it is outside the current dominant approach in psychological research, i.e. cognitive psychology. I am sympathetic with Vygotsky’s desire of considering that a unified psychology would not need any adjective. However, it still needs a name (‘cultural’, ‘sociocultural’, CHAT, Vygotskian or Marxist), because such a proposal would have to tackle all sort of obstacles in order to debunk current dominant approaches, or at least to convince other approaches (such as psychoanalysis), to work together for a unity of psychology.

The orientation of this non-dualistic approach moves from the investigation of what emotions ‘are’, to the investigation of what emotions ‘do’. In the analysis of emotions, emotions are used as pedagogic devices, interactional resources, structural parameters, and so on. I describe classroom microsituations that show the ways in which particular emotions emerge and are transformed, but also transform the context. I am interested in showing that emotions can be sometimes functional to the aim pursued at being in a classroom (student’s learning), and sometimes non functional to that aim. The analysis of these data, however, involves the construction of a more general approach, which I call sociocultural since the analysis embraces emotions as both individual and social. For this reason, the ‘testing’ exercise that I undertake in the data analysis chapters allows me to infer explanations about the ways in which emotions operate as part of interactional settings, i.e. within the context of social practices.

My research question emerges from these intertwined needs and aims and it is: *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* To answer this question, and in order to engage with the data, I draw three conceptual foci, which I present in Chapter 5, i.e. context, practice and microhistory, which offer elements to discuss the emergence and transformation of emotions in the classroom.

The approach designed for the study of emotions needs to be both socially situated and contextually contingent, but simultaneously, it needs to capture that emotions are individually experienced and lived, and bodily grounded. The movement among the

physiological, subjectivist or social constructionist approaches (which I explain in Chapters 2 and 3) does, however, create something of a difficulty in speaking about emotions in empirical terms. While it may be conceptually a comparatively easy step to argue that emotions are ‘all of the above’ (physiological, subjective and socially constructed), it is harder to apply that position in practice (in research practice). For example, when speaking of a girl’s smile in a classroom activity, can I realistically say that ‘she is happy’, without entirely objectifying the emotion as a ‘thing’ which has a specified (and objectively known) character. If we do that, we surely strip the emotion of its subjective features.

Similarly, if we say that ‘she smiles because she is happy’ (or embarrassed, or any other feeling) or ‘she expresses happiness’, then we end up in a highly causal situation where either the emotion is a bodily action, or one where the contexts create emotions. Also, we would end up with a differentiation between an emotion and its expression. Were we to move to the more cautious research language such as ‘she enacts a smiling action as an indicator of happy type behaviour or response’, as if she were participating in a drama, à la Goffman (1971; 2005), then presumably the emotion itself disappears altogether, leaving bland descriptions of action that do little to characterise the emotionality of social situations.

Part of my interest in this thesis is attempting to explore ways of dealing with emotions empirically. This is not so grand as to involve specifying a new language for dealing with emotions; rather, I want to find the strengths and limitations of the theoretical and methodological tools which I develop here for dealing with emotions based on some of the seminal Vygotskian ideas regarding psychological study, and to explore their implications for the study of emotions.

## **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis comprises 10 chapters. In Chapters 2 and 3, I discuss the literature review and present the grounds for building a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions, based on Vygotsky’s work. In Chapter 4, I present my research design and some of my methodological decisions. In Chapter 5, I define three foci with which I can undertake the fieldwork and use this approach, in order to refine it and examine its potential. In Chapters 6 to 8, I undertake the analysis of the empirical study, while in Chapter 9, I discuss the implication of the data analysis and respond the research question. Chapter

10 is devoted to drawing the conclusions of this research and to discussing the contribution and implications of my research.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present a literature review about the study of emotions in sociology and in psychology, respectively. In relation to the sociology of emotions, the social character of emotions is captured and the impact of society on the body, and thus, on emotions, is acknowledged. However, the role of the individual is disregarded because it is not the object of the discipline. In this sense, when the sociological approaches presented acknowledge the biology of emotions, they implicitly imply the acceptance of the existence of a science that deals with the physiology of emotions as such, while the realm of sociology is restricted to the parts of emotions that are related to culture and history. I argue, the sociological study of emotions opens the space for a dichotomy in which emotions can be studied by either one discipline or the other, but not in an integrated manner.

In Chapter 3, I present my argument about the relevance of Vygotsky to the contemporary study of emotions, which starts on page 56. Before presenting Vygotsky's foundation for the study of emotions I discuss current individual and social psychological approaches to the study of emotions, and I argue that they do not solve the limitation of the complexity in approaching simultaneously the individual and social aspects of emotions. In relation to Vygotsky, I rely in particular on two concepts from his work in order to build a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions. In the first place, I take up his suggestion for a unified psychology in which psychological phenomena are not separated into different objects for diverse disciplines, as happens when there are disciplines that study the biological functioning of emotions and other disciplines that study their 'subjective' or 'interpretative' part. Additionally, I pursue Vygotsky's suggestion for a historical approach to the study of psychological phenomena, and so, for the study of emotions. I finish this chapter by discussing the zone of proximal development as a useful psychological concept for the study of emotions in the classroom.

Chapter 4 presents my methodological decisions in my research design and the foundations of the decisions taken. Chapter 5 completes the task of defining the way in which the empirical work was undertaken. In this chapter, I present the three conceptual foci that I use later in the empirical work. These foci are arguments that extend the initial research question. The research question address in this research poses the challenge to understand emotions in the concrete context of classrooms, the

participation in the particular practices that take place in that context, and the ‘moving picture’ of the way in which emotions emerge, transform and are transformed over time. The three foci, context, practice and microhistory, emerge from my reviews of sociocultural literature as a response to the need to create optical filters to approach the empirical part of my research. All of them address the situated character of emotions in the classroom; each of them offers a slightly different perspective on the same phenomena, offering new ‘lenses’ and enabling the identification and discussion of different elements in a microsituation.

Chapters 6 to 8 are devoted to the analysis of data. In each of them, I present one excerpt from the data. The data are used cumulatively so that the data presented in Chapter 6 are also discussed in the following two chapters; the data presented in Chapter 7, are also discussed in Chapter 8; and in Chapter 8 the three excerpts presented (in Chapters 6, 7 and 8) are discussed.

In Chapter 6, I analyse emotions in context. I show that there is not a clear-cut separation between emotions in individuals and the social situations in which they participate. Emotions are situated not only in terms of their emergence, but also in the way in which they are shaped and in their relevance to the engagement in the participation of individuals in the ongoing tasks, and as part of the activity. Thus, I argue that the study of emotions needs to acknowledge their context in order not to split their individual and social aspects.

In Chapter 7, I analyse emotions as part of practices, which enables discussion of the idea of the embodiment of emotions in practice. In this chapter, I show that the embodiment of emotions is complex as it is simultaneously both meaningful, in the sense that participants make the situation within the context of the practice, and physical (in the body), in terms of externalisation through behaviours, which in turn contributes to the construction of the situated practice. ‘Behaviours’ imply then an ‘organisation’ of the body as part of the actions undertaken in social spaces, which make the enactment of emotions socially shaped. The experience of emotions cannot be separated or isolated from the practices in which emotions emerge. I also identify some functions of emotions in the classroom: regarding the relations among participants, including power relations, the relations with artefacts and circumstances in the setting, and the relations to the goals of the tasks and to the object/ive of the activity. Finally, I identify some functions of emotions linked to the continuity and rupture of the situated history.

In Chapter 8, I analyse emotions through time, in microhistory. Microhistory, I argue, is not a linear unfolding of the past, but a pulling to the future, implicit in the motive of being in a classroom, which in turn is translated into the plans and goals brought about by the teacher. I show patterns in which plans and situated actions take place in the different classrooms, which are negotiated with ‘surprises’ that the students ‘produce’, offering a path for specific emotions to change. I also discuss the particular way in which adolescents’ behaviour (rejection of the old) constitutes a challenge in the negotiation with their teacher. Emotions develop in a complex interplay between the situation in which they emerge and the negotiation of possible futures and delineate paths of collective transformations in particular classrooms. Additionally, I show how structures of emotions that conform teachers’ particular practices have as a result diverse ways of doing things together, and eventually result in the collective transformation of the classrooms.

I start Chapter 9, I present a fourth excerpt which I use to argue that emotions are taught in the zone of proximal development and the implicit knowledge embedded in the ways in which teachers deal with emotions. Afterwards, I focus on addressing the question that leads this research, by inferring some implications from the data. For so doing, I discuss a range of the understandings of emotions in the classroom achieved in the analysis undertaken in Chapters 6 to 8. Then, I evaluate the importance of sociocultural theory to enable the understanding of emotions.

In Chapter 10, I wrap up the results of the research through the evaluation of the contribution of the research to the study of emotions and consider some practical implications and future research.

## **Chapter 2 – Emotions in sociology**

### **Introduction**

My aim is to use Vygotsky's (1997b) proposal for both a unified psychology and a historical approach as a source for understanding emotions in a way that moves away from a separation between their individual and social aspects. A unified psychology addresses consciousness, the unconscious and behaviour, and takes as the point of departure the unity of mind and matter. I argue that to achieve Vygotsky's vision we need to understand emotions as a part of social practices. Additionally, a historical account allows us to approach the complex movement of psychological phenomena over time. The emergence and transformation of emotions takes place not only as a response to a stimulus originating in the past, but also as part of a tension with the situation of which emotions are a part in the current situation, and in this way also, with the future.

To develop my argument, I consider first the social aspect of emotions through a discussion of the sociology of emotions, by way of the literature presented in this chapter. In the next chapter, I review the individualistic approaches to emotions and the difficulties that psychology encounters in offering a social account of them. Afterwards, I review Vygotsky's suggestions for the study of emotions as part of his unified psychology, as well as the importance of 'history' in his research approach. After these two chapters of literature review, I engage in the analysis of empirical data, for which I discuss the methodological issues in Chapter 4, and I delineate three concepts developed as empirical criteria to identify and analyse emotions. These concepts, which I call foci, i.e. context, practice and microhistory, allow me to show in the second part of the thesis how emotions 'work' and how they are 'taught' in classrooms.

### **What do emotions do?**

A great deal of sociological research has overlooked emotions. Lock (1993) for example argues in his consideration of the body in social theory that emotions have been 'bracketed out' from sociology. Emotions have had "a rather 'ethereal' existence within sociology, lurking in the shadows or banished to the margins of sociological thought and practice" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998b, p. 131). This may be due to residual positivistic concerns or the lack of a tradition of researching this issue in disciplines

outside of psychology. In this line, it might also be possible that emotions are considered simply in the realm of the ‘non-social’, and precisely as part of the domains of psychology, and so relegated to what is ‘inside the skin’ and therefore ‘expatriated’ from sociological theories and research (Williams and Bendelow, 1998a). Yet in the last three decades sociology, amongst other social disciplines, has become interested in the study of emotions, as part of the cultural or social ‘turn’ (Koschmann, 1999).

In recent decades, emotions have been considered as experienced and expressed in the social realm (Hochschild, 1979; 2003b). Early studies about emotions as social were particularly interested in the role of emotions in the workplace (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Morris and Feldman, 1996a; Parkinson, 1991). More recently, Roth (2008; 2007b) has studied the relation between knowledge and emotions, and how the latter can be detected in intonation when discussing work related issues in the workplace. Lutz and White (1986) attribute the emergence of a burgeoning interest in emotions to three factors: the dissatisfaction with a cognitive-reductive view of human beings as analogous to computers; the need to broaden the understanding of sociocultural experience from the perspective of “the person who lives it”; and the strengthening of interpretative approaches that can make sense of phenomena that would be inaccessible through quantitative studies of social realities.

In their account of the three-decade-old sociology of emotions, Turner and Stets (2005) justify this turn to the ‘sociality’ of emotions in a more radical way. They argue that:

Emotions are the ‘glue’ binding people together and generating commitments to large-scale social and cultural structures; in fact, emotions are what makes social structures and systems of cultural symbols viable. Conversely, emotions are also what can drive people apart and push them to tear down social structures and to challenge cultural traditions... (Turner and Stets, p. 1, emphasis added)

They put emotions right in the centre of social life, and attribute the value of a precondition to social and cultural life. Williams and Bendelow (1998a, 1998b) perhaps more cautiously attribute to emotions a social origin, and recognise the importance of studying them: they state that emotions provide an existential basis to identity, culture and social life. Following Csordas (1990; 1994) and Denzin (1984), they affirm that emotions are “existentially embodied modes of being” (Williams and Bendelow, 1998a, p. xvi) through which we engage actively with the world.

Lutz and White (1986) compile a wide variety of perspectives in relation to emotions. These authors suggest that these academic perspectives and even popular



understandings of emotions tend to lean towards one side of a set of oppositions: either material or ideal, i.e. either in the body or in the mind; either studied as individual aspects or as social phenomena. For Lutz and White, this sway towards one of the poles in each case has “narrowed theories of emotion and social life” (1986, p. 429) and restricted our conception of them as either/or. One of the key arguments I wish to develop through the thesis is that the dichotomies on which such separations are built, and, more specifically, the conception of the ‘social’ that they imply, may be misleading. One of the complexities in conceptualizing emotions is that there seems to be a variety of levels of explanations through which they can be accounted for. For example, Kitayama and Markus (1994b) suggest that emotions occur at different layers: neurochemical, physiological, psychological, cultural and social. However, these ‘layers’ are closely interconnected, and I would argue, artificially separated when delineated in that way. On the other hand, the reference to all these different layers underlines, to paraphrase Csordas’s (1994) reference to the body, the fact that we can no longer consider emotions as ‘a brute fact of nature’.

### **The social origin of emotions**

I now present perspectives on emotions that emphasise their socially constructed character, and thus, the diversity of emotions among cultures. These approaches are socio-constructionist perspectives, and are concerned with how emotions are prescribed or driven by social context, and how they become socially ‘functional’ in terms of, for example, reinforcing social norms (Armon-Jones, 1985; Armon-Jones, 1986a; Armon-Jones, 1986b). The particular perspectives that I review here are emotional labour, emotional capital and emotional geographies.

#### ***Emotional labour***

An important development in the field of emotions in social life (Gordon, 1981; Hochschild, 1983; Hochschild, 1979; Kemper, 1981; Scheff, 1983) is the concept of ‘emotional labour’ coined by Hochschild (2003b, original 1983). In her classic study *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Hochschild (2003b) contested biologically-based theories of emotions (Darwin, Ekman and Prodger, 1999; James, 1884), which considered emotions as ‘sealed biological events’ (Hochschild, 1998), motored by ‘instinct’, created by external stimulus and passively lived through by individuals. Using her study of flight attendants, Hochschild (2003, originally 1983) argued that emotions were not created ‘naturally’ or spontaneously, but were managed

within the context of work so that the workers could display emotions that were appropriate to their jobs. Hochschild (2003) pointed out that workers' emotional management aimed to produce a particular emotional state in others, and that this was achieved by increasing, suppressing and even faking emotions. Hochschild also argued that flight attendants are part of a category of jobs "that call for emotional labour" (Hochschild, 2003, p. 147), and she produced a detailed analysis of how people in this role manage their behaviour according to certain 'feeling rules' that are dictated by the workplace, such as the requirement for flight attendants to smile at the passengers.

Teachers also display or refrain from displaying certain emotions in order to produce an effect in their students (Hargreaves, 2000; Jenkins and Conley, 2007; Winograd, 2003) and other people inside the school (Hargreaves, 2002b). For example, a teacher might show enthusiasm for a particular topic she is teaching, independently of her particular appreciation of it. Similarly, given that teachers are typically expected not to become emotionally involved with students, a teacher might refrain from openly expressing his anger about a students' behaviour. Hochschild (2003) argues that individuals sell their 'emotional self' for the benefit of institutions, suppressing their real emotions so that the institution can achieve its market-driven goals. Emotions and their expressions began to be considered part of the labour exchanged for a salary, thus becoming commodities in contemporary post-industrial society. Hochschild thus underlines the *social character* of the *process* of emotions (Ekman and Oster, 1979; Ekman and Rosenberg, 2005; Goffman, 1971; Goffman, 2005; Hochschild, 2003b), and the ways in which they are the subject to control both by individuals and by institutions.

By recounting of a story a woman's emotional experiences on her wedding day, Hochschild (1998) gives an illustration of how emotions can be analysed socially. In her sociological analysis of a bride's recount of her wedding, Hochschild points out that the woman realises that she 'ought to' feel happy on 'the happiest day of her life', and at a certain point during her wedding she starts feeling 'genuinely' happy. With this story she identifies the management of emotions as an active process through which feeling rules are used to organise our own emotional experiences. Through this example, Hochschild illustrates how social situations come to define for an individual a sense of appropriate emotional behaviour. There is, however, a limitation with this story. Hochschild leaves out the explanation of the origin of other emotions that emerged in the bride's story, including those of which the bride was not 'completely aware'. For instance, the bride expressed a feeling of disappointment at not receiving enough help on her wedding day. She had not anticipated this feeling and she did not have to work

towards it, as she did with happiness. We might say then, that implicit in this story is the explanation of those emotions that are socially managed; in contrast to this, I suggest that emotions are frequently not fully ‘managed to the rules’ or ‘logically controllable’ but they are experienced and enacted.

Although in Hochschild’s (1998) analysis of the bride’s story the focus is on the management of feelings, her analysis helps us to understand the impact of the social ‘feeling rules’ on individual emotions, which is how individual emotions redefine the ‘feeling rules’. Hochschild’s point about the social organisation of emotions is necessary to show that individuals work on their emotions to make them appropriate to social contexts. She points out that managing feeling involves “publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 2003b, p. 7), and that these public displays can be managed by workers. Her perspective follows a dramaturgic approach similar to Goffman (1961; 1971; 2005), in the sense of understanding emotions as ‘acted’ and socially managed. For her, the emotional effort consists either of *surface acting*, or *deep acting*. Surface acting is done through the deliberate emotional modification that allows the display of the required emotion. This can be achieved in several ways, such as cognitively (through giving ourselves reasons to behave in a particular way), bodily (e.g. through breathing) or through gestures (like smiling in agreement to the situation). By contrast, deep acting is done through getting into character –becoming ‘the character’ we want to represent. As Hochschild puts it; “my conscious mental work keeps the feeling that I conjure up from being part of ‘myself’” (Hochschild, 2003b, p. 36). Emotions are created and are, in the end, *experienced*. Hochschild’s analysis helps us see how organisations establish or at least implicitly require individuals to follow ‘feeling rules’ that specify preferences in the modalities of emotional expression (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2001; Hochschild, 2003b).

From Hochschild’s (2003) perspective, individuals’ emotions are driven by social contexts. As she states, ‘emotion work’, feeling rules, and interpersonal exchange make up our private ‘emotional system’ (2003, p. 76). Three basic elements from Hochschild’s (Hochschild, 2003b; Hochschild, 2004) (2003, 2004) theory of emotional labour are at the centre of her approach: (1) the importance of the context, expressed in what she calls the ‘feeling rules’ for understanding how individuals handle their emotions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 2003b; Morris and Feldman, 1996a), (2) the fact that individuals get actively involved in demonstrating certain

emotions (Hochschild, 2003), and (3) the fact that the purpose of emotional labour is to produce a response in others (Hochschild, 2003, p. 147).

Winograd (2003), following Hochschild (2003) and focussing on emotions in the workplace, underlines three criteria for a job to require emotional labour: that a face-to-face contact with a public exists, that the worker aims to produce an emotional state in another person, and that certain external control exists over the worker's emotional labour. Therefore, he concludes that the jobs that are most likely to demand emotional labour are those in the service sector, including jobs that involve interaction, even if it is not face to face. In these, the person towards whom such emotional labour is directed could be a customer, a patient, a student or recipient of a particular service.

Feeling rules, according to Hochschild (2003), vary not only from one social group to another, (e.g. by social class, gender, or religion, among other things), but also according to institutional aims. For example, if the aim of schooling is to develop cognitive abilities and to leave aside emotions, teachers' feeling rules have to adjust to this aim, by for example discouraging students' emotional expressions in relation to their personal lives and by channelling their emotional energy towards the focus of curricular content. In this way, emotions are treated as subordinate to institutional goals. In turn, this handling of emotions impacts on workplace interactions and has an effect on the results of work, such as goal achievement, customer satisfaction (Hochschild, 2003b) and even job satisfaction (Gosserand, 2002). In fact, many forms of work, particularly service jobs, can be considered in these terms: amusement park hosts expressing happiness to ensure customers' satisfaction; people offering funeral services appear sorrowful in empathy for the dead person's relatives or friends; or police officers' annoyance or anger when stopping a fight in the street with the aim of discouraging the fighters, are all possible examples. Hochschild (2003) claims that middle class service jobs are the kind of jobs that require more handling of emotions than working class ones. However, these claims are not based on empirical studies and are therefore highly contestable as we do not know the emotional labour involved in other kind of jobs. For example, it might well be that the repetitive tasks involved in a factory job require considerable emotional management to overcome boredom in order to 'get through the day' (Gold, 1964).

There are display rules in organisations (Sutton, 2007; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003; Wharton and Erickson, 1995) which consist of explicit or implicit regulations of behaviour, such as speaking in particular ways, avoiding talking about certain issues, or

using or avoiding particular kinds of gestures. In Hochschild's thesis, feeling rules are sustained by a sort of folk psychology (Bruner, 1990; Saarni, 1999) that is not only an interpretative resource for explaining actions or feelings in terms of the canonical and the extraordinary (Bruner, 1990), but which also influences the ways in which emotions are 'felt' by people. In particular, in work-related situations, the 'social rules' impact on the emotions through the immediate context where emotions are displayed, reducing the employee's emotional autonomy (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002), as he or she has to show or hide emotions in his or her performance at work (Wharton and Erickson, 1995).

In the context of teaching, studies that focus on emotional labour report that teachers deploy, display, and *use* their emotions in diverse ways (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003). For example, a teacher might try to control their anger, and wait 'with patience' to speak in private to a student (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003: 344). Teachers often find emotional labour difficult and stressful, a challenging task, as students can be quite adept at detecting fake feelings (Larabee, 2000). The teaching profession can be characterised by a level of 'control' implied by rules of emotional behaviour (Winograd, 2003). "The external control for teachers is usually subtle and indirect... rules are not necessarily taught formally to teachers, but they are collaboratively constructed in the everyday work of teachers, students, principals, parents and teacher educators" (Winograd, 2003: 1647).

Emotional dissonance refers to the *difference* between expressions and feelings (Abraham, 1998; Morris, Freeman and Fitz-Gibbon, 1987) and this creates a *conflict*. According to Hochschild, the emotional "separation between 'me' and my face [the emotion displayed], and 'me' and my feeling" (Hochschild, 2003b, p. 37) at work, as a result of the commoditisation of emotions (that is to say, the conversion of emotions to commodities) and the emergence of emotional labour, implies and creates an estrangement that has psychological costs. The consequence of this emotional investment for the employee can create stress, and can contribute to workers' 'burn out'. Further research (Morris and Feldman, 1996b) seems to support Hochschild's claim about the negative effect of emotional labour on individuals. In this sense, Morris and Feldman (1996a) argue that the 'emotional dissonance' that occurs when there is a difference between displayed and felt emotions can be harmful for the individual. Heuven and Arnold (2003), for example, explored emotional dissonance experienced by cabin attendants. In a study with 220 cabin attendants, they found that emotional dissonance is an essential predictor of human service burnout, where they understand

burnout as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. In a similar way, Tewksbury and Higgins (2006) examined the ways in which the emotional dissonance experienced by correctional staff created work stress and, in turn, affected staff's satisfaction with supervisors (Tewksbury and Higgins, 2006).

Undoubtedly, Hochschild marks a turning point in the understanding of emotions, taking into account that they are played out within social contexts. However, a weakness of this perspective is the fact that emotions seem to be reduced to 'manageable properties' that are altered through the individual's engagement in an active emotional display. The perspective is very valuable in terms of recognising the role that intentionality in relation to the context can have in the transformation of emotions. Hochschild's analysis implies that there is in emotion firstly a 'functional' implication that individuals actively orientate towards cultural values, and secondly an orientation to the future, as emotions can be managed towards an end, i.e. a teleological pulling of emotions. However, the approach of emotional labour does not look at how emotions function in social practice, but rather concentrates on the normative 'rules' that surround our practices. All in all, the study of emotional labour represents a valuable approach towards a social account of emotions.

### ***Emotional capital***

The concept of 'emotional capital' (Nowotny, 1981) is an extension of the concepts of social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital (1990; 1998; Bourdieu and Nice, 1986; Bourdieu and Nice, 1993). Social capital refers to contacts, social knowledge and qualifications, and other social skills that allow actors to compete in a field. As with economic capital, social capital, can not only be invested, but also expanded and interchanged (Bourdieu, 2001). In line with this idea, in her study about the reduced participation of women in public life in Austria and the perceptions of women's potential political participation, Nowotny (1981) coined the concept of 'emotional capital'.

According to Nowotny (1981), the public and private spheres are separated modes of existence whose boundaries vary in diverse societies: the private is defined as the domestic, family-life, environments, while the public consists all aspects outside of those spheres. Nowotny (1981) suggests that the public sphere is the one in which political, military, and economic power are concentrated, and she argues that the private sphere is subordinated to - and in many ways supportive of - the continuance of the public sphere. Nowotny suggests that these spheres are characterised by gender

differentiation, with women participating less in the public sphere and more in the private sphere. From this assumption, Nowotny asks questions about whether the rules for converting capitals into gains were different for men and women. Emotional capital is the term she uses to describe the capital that the private sphere has to offer: “as long as women were confined to the private sphere, this was the only capital that they could acquire” (Nowotny, 1981, p. 148), and consequently, the only one that they could cumulate and exchange. Nowotny specifies that “emotional capital constitutes: knowledge, contacts and relations as well as access to emotionally valued skills and assets, which hold within any social network characterised at least partly by affective ties” (Nowotny, 1981, p. 149).

As Nowotny (1981) states, “the rules of the labor market are such that emotional capital gained in the private sphere is not convertible into *economic capital*” (Nowotny, 1981, p. 148, emphasis in the original). The main possible use of emotional capital is, she suggests, its investment in family, and particularly in children and husbands. Nowotny (1981) then claims that, in contrast to men, whose economic capital generates more capital - what she calls “‘higher’ forms of social capital” - in general, the economic capital women gain in the labour market is converted by women into emotional capital, as they reinvest their social capital in other family members. For example, mothers encourage certain behaviours in children that are appropriate for interacting with people in the social group of which they are part. Emotional capital is, according to Reay (2004) a low valued ‘variant of social capital’ from the private sphere, the value of which is not recognised in the ‘political family’, however, this is emotional capital can be transferred from the private to the public sphere (Nowotny, 1981; Reay, 2004), as a ‘publicization of private’ (Nowotny, 1981). Conversely, this form of women’s capital remains a “secondary currency... reflecting the secondary positions that women could hope to obtain in the public sphere” (Nowotny, 1981, p. 153).

Based on Nowotny’s (1981) concept, Reay (2000; 2004) highlights the value of emotional capital as a strategy for social ‘mobility’ used by mothers – often working mothers - across the social classes, in the sense that middle class mothers, for example, use their emotional capital to ensure their children develop the necessary skills to become skilful middle class adults. By contrast, the lack of that capital makes working class women unable to offer those skills to their children. Reay defines emotional capital as the “emotional resources passed on from mother to child through processes of parental involvement” (2004, p. 569). She suggests that emotional capital is, like other

capitals, relational as it is played out together with, or in competition with, the rest of them, offering advantages or, when missing, disadvantages for social actors in society. Reay (2004) attributes to emotions greater value than other forms of capitals, and argues that emotional capital can influence individual and class trajectories.

An important aspect of emotional capital, according to Reay (2004) is the basic role of the family in its transmission. Reay states that, “it is from the family that children derive modes of thinking, types of dispositions, sets of meaning and qualities of style” (Reay, 2004, p. 58), and argues that the value of such qualities is defined by the dominant classes. Other researchers (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Erickson, Fujimura and Pardo, 1998; Erickson, 1993; James, 1989; Wharton and Erickson, 1995; Zajdow, 1995) have shown that emotional labour is mostly realised by women in the family for the maintenance of emotional aspects of family relationships, Reay (2000, 2004) focuses on emotions in terms of a capital transmitted through mothers’ emotional involvement in child care. Thus, Reay’s (2000; 2004) attributes to emotions an economic value.

In her qualitative study of mothers’ emotional involvement in the family, Reay (2000; 2004) found some important social class-based differences: while middle-class women could offer their children emotional capital, working-class women were unable to do so, as they were “frequently hampered by poverty, insufficient educational knowledge and lack of confidence” (Reay, 2000, p. 574). Therefore, while middle-class women invested emotional capital to generate their children’s future educational success, for working-class women, who had low levels of ‘dominant’ cultural, economic and social capital, it was very difficult to offer their children the advantage of emotional capital or academic profits. For Reay (2004), then, the concept of emotional capital is useful for both emphasising important aspects of gender and class differentiation and for understanding the impact of family dynamics in the educational-social field.

However, we can see in Reay’s (Reay, 2000; 2004) argument, as she herself recognises, how slippery the concept of emotional capital can be. Firstly, Nowotny (1981) sometimes treated emotion as a form of ‘capital’ and sometimes as ‘currency’. While ‘capital’ refers to resources that actors use in a social field in order to acquire rewards and power, ‘currency’ refers quite specifically and restrictedly to ‘money’. These two metaphors are different, and the fact that they are sometimes used interchangeably despite their distinct implications can lead to confusion. Secondly, as Reay (2004) recognises, emotionality permeates virtually every aspect of mothering, and consequently, the conceptual boundaries of emotional capital and the role they play in



relation to social class are difficult to define. There seem to be other components implicated in the analysis of emotions, such as time and pace, and possibly the construction of ‘aspirations’ or ‘dispositions’, but it is debatable that what is at stake can be treated as a capital. Thirdly, Reay (2004) also recognises the shortcoming of using an economic metaphor to understand the complexities of the care relationships that take place within the family context. Indeed, offering emotional support might also be rewarding for the carer not just in terms of economics, if indeed it can be said to be economically rewarding at all, but in all kinds of complex ways, as we will see in the chapters to come. For this reason, the definition of emotions and ‘the emotional’ as a capital fails in offering an embracing and fruitful metaphor. Fourthly, unfortunately, the theorisation of emotions as a capital can have the negative implication of attributing individual responsibility to the ‘capitalisation’ of resources. Reay (2004) acknowledges this, questioning whether emotions *per se* could be ‘handled’ as a resource independently of their links to other types of capital.

Finally, in contrast to other capitals, emotional involvement with or care for children can have an impact on the educational achievements of individuals, but that impact might be subordinated or combined in complex ways to other forms of capital. As such, and as Reay (2000, 2004) herself acknowledges, it is not necessarily sustainable to argue that emotional capital has a clear impact as a resource that offers advantages to the players in the educational field. For this reason, Reay’s (2000; 2004) concept of emotional capital loses some of its explanatory value. Although it has utility in helping us to understand the relevance of emotions as a socially mediated feature of action, in the end, the metaphor of ‘capital’ creates more analytic problems than it resolves.

### ***Emotional geographies***

Hargreaves (2001a) coins the concept of ‘emotional geographies’ to draw attention to teachers’ recollection of the emotional distance in the bonds with other people in the school. In particular, he suggests that “emotional geographies consist of the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other.” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 815; Hargreaves, 2001a, p. 7). The idea behind this concept is that ‘emotional geographies’ help to identify what supports or threatens basic social bonds, as well as supporting the understanding of relationships in terms of distance and closeness.

In his research on teachers' emotions, Hargreaves (2000; 2001a) sustains that emotional 'distance' or 'closeness' affects understanding among teachers, students, colleagues and parents (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves, 2001a). He classified the geographies that threaten emotional understanding among people in schools as follows: personal, cultural, moral, professional, political and physical. The first of those, the personal geography, refers to how close or distant people are from one another in the most personal aspects of the relationship (e.g. in terms of friendship). The second type of emotional geography is cultural, relating to differences among people in terms of race, culture, class, gender and disability, which can create stereotypes (Bernhard, 1999).

For Hargreaves (2000; 2001a), a third kind of emotional geography refers the 'moral geographies', which concern to people's purposes for their relationships and their sense of unity in terms of accomplishing them. When there is disagreement concerning purposes between individuals, the 'geographical distance' in this sense, will be greater, and the individuals involved may be defensive and they might question the purposes of others. The fourth category of emotional geographies are the professional ones, which describe the way in which norms define professionalism, either as a bond between colleagues or between service providers and clients, reflecting an ethics of caring and working together (Grumet, 1988). The last kinds of geographies defined by Hargreaves are the political and the physical. The former are related to differences of power and status, which affect communication and increase the power of some people over others (Blase and Anderson, 1995); the latter kind of geography relates to the time and space that actually brings people together or keeps them physically separated (Lasky, 2005; van Veen and Lasky, 2005). For example, teachers can have long or short periods of interaction with each other according to the times in which they are in the school, which has an impact on the possibilities for building professional relationships.

In Hargreaves's perspective, emotional geographies are viewed both intersubjectively and subjectively. The perspective is intersubjective (Denzin, 1985) because emotions are seen as the result of the patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions. However, there is I suggest a limited notion of 'social' here, as the context in which those interactions take place is generally not explored empirically, and is treated as of implicit concern, rather than of direct relevance. Emotional geographies become an abstract and de-contextualised property of individuals' relationships, but the empirical examination of emotions in action is not typically of interest. In contrast, the perspective

I am developing in this thesis involves attempting to build a methodology for the close analysis of emotions in social context.

Furthermore, there is a methodological difficulty with this perspective; the theory of emotional geographies outlined by Hargreaves is grounded in the ‘recollection’ of the emotional experiences of teachers (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves, 2001a; Hargreaves, 2002a; Hargreaves, 2002b; Hargreaves, 2005b) as generated through interviews. One of the key problems with this assumption is that it implies that ‘recollection’ is the same as ‘lived experience’, and therefore trades on the assumption that it is possible to re-capture the experiences of emotions within an interview scenario.

Finally, in the emotional geographies approach, if emotions can be studied and understood based on their individual recollection through interviews, the implication is that emotions can be consciously recollected. I would argue that these expressions are interpretations of the ‘lived experience’, which, while nonetheless valid and relevant, are only one way of investigating emotions, and one which sidelines the complexity of the social negotiation of emotions which is implied but not examined by Hargreaves’ approach.

### ***A balance of socio-constructionist approaches***

The three perspectives presented - emotional labour, emotional capital and emotional geographies – can all be categorised as social constructionist, in the sense that they emphasise the social constructions of emotions. In all of these approaches, emotions are regarded as originating in, and being maintained, transmitted and transformed by social interactions. Berger and Luckmann (1967) were classic exponents of the constructivist approach in sociology. However, the perspectives presented here also align more generally with post-modern criticism of essentialism, which have been developed in diverse fields such as philosophy, anthropology, linguistics and sociology, and which emphasize that human ‘traits’ or ‘features’, and in this case emotions, are socially and culturally configured.

Csordas (1990; 1994) suggests that emotions must be seen as culturally situated practices. In the perspectives I presented above, the study of emotions has taken a similar path to the ways that cognition has been studied in sociology: from biological reductionism, to the view that human biology is only and always enacted in social contexts. For some constructionist approaches, just as people’s interactions lead to knowledge constructions, interactions also lead to the construction of emotions.

Emotions, including feelings, sentiments, motivation, expression, and their representations are seen as cultural products (Lyon, 1998) which are negotiated in the social context and 'acquired' by individuals through socialisation in particular sociocultural contexts.

Perspectives that emphasize the biological hardwiring of emotions tend to study the commonalities of emotions regardless of culture. However, in the perspectives presented so far in this chapter, emotions seem to be reduced to or mainly the result of social and cultural constraints. For example, for Hochschild (1998) emotions are defined in terms of matching the inner experience to an emotional 'dictionary'. It is culture and not biology that defines emotions:

Culture is an active, constituent part of emotion, not a passive medium within which biologically pre-formulated, 'natural' emotions emerge. Each culture has its unique emotional dictionary, which defines what is and isn't, and its emotional babble, which defines what one should and should not feel in a given context... they determine predisposition with which we greet an emotional experience. (Hochschild, 1998: 7)

The socio-constructionist approaches put culture "as the primary source and the locus" (Lyon, 1998, p. 40), where social relationships and the social discourse take place. Emotions are not only symbolised or represented (Shweder, 1993), but 'created' by social relationships. For Lutz (1986), emotions are forms of symbolic action, as they are socially constructed (Rosaldo, 1980; Rosaldo, 1984). Socio-constructionist perspectives open the possibility for studying emotions as social, not as 'essential' and 'common' to all human beings, but as variable among cultures. These perspectives emphasise culture, symbols and meanings that individuals 'acquire' through socialisation, and construct, particularly through language, but in general through actions. Indeed, for Hochschild, individuals actively engage in the construction of emotions (1979; 1998; 2003b; 2005) by managing and working the emotions towards socially constructed 'feeling rules'. For Rosaldo (1984), emotions involve both meaning and feeling, and therefore, the labels subjectively associated with the emotions perceived are socially constructed, and vary across cultures and time.

There are three main contributions in what I call socio-constructionist approaches to the understanding of emotions. Firstly, they emphasize the interest in understanding how individuals 'adapt' to social contexts, so they focus on the relationship between individuals and the social world in which they live. Secondly, this approach offers a possibility of understanding the social variability of emotions and thus a diversity of emotions in relation to cultures as emotions change in relation to social rules. Thirdly, they assume a link between emotions and the social context in which they take place,

and implicitly recognise the transformation of emotions through time, not only in terms of the individual history (through the management of an individual's emotions), but in terms of transformations of institutions, and thus, societies, with the transformation of discourses.

There are three main criticisms of socio-constructionism. Firstly, there is an implicit relativism of emotions which makes them fully dependent on culture, cultural meanings and significance. If emotions are managed, situated, interactional and culturally defined and signified, then in terms of physiology, it would be necessary to explain the role of culture in the shaping of emotions. It seems that the sociality of emotions totally erases biological dependence, and the body is fully defined by culture. Some critics (for example Lyon, 1998; McNay, 2003), even suggest the body is reduced to a sign. Cromby expresses this as:

... even where subjectivity is theorized, it is often somewhat disembodied, in that the particularities of the body are disregarded, downplayed, added in later, or made adjunctive to other supposed mental-linguistic entities or processes. Hence the body tends either to be omitted from constructionism, or only to appear as surface of inscription, metaphor or text—rather than as a fleshy organ bearing both enablements and constraints (Cromby, 2004, p. 798)

This critique highlights the socially subjective character of emotions in socio-constructionism, while downplaying the 'material' aspect of emotions, the body in this case, which is ignored, or at least subordinated to the social construction of emotions. However, I do not suggest that socio-constructionist approaches reject or dismiss the body as such, because they express a constant preoccupation with the body (see for example Hochschild, 2003a), but the body is subordinated to the social world, and it is difficult to understand its materiality. It seems that it is necessary to do what Lock (1993) suggests: to understand the interaction in context; to come back to the "living human body". This body, this minded body, participates in particular social contexts, and the challenge is to understand how both the 'minded' and the material aspect of such participation takes place simultaneously.

A second criticism is that emotions are considered as being managed towards meeting the social 'standards', as if emotions were always intentionally and possibly even consciously managed, as if they could always be expressed through language, and as if they tended to be functional. As the neurosciences have stressed, emotions seem not to be always available to consciousness, and many aspects of emotions are unconscious (Damasio, 1994; Damasio, 1999; Turner and Stets, 2005), in that individuals are not aware of certain bodily reactions or functioning.

A final and the most foundational criticism is in relation to dualisms. In spite of an attempt to overcome the dualisms of body-mind, individual-social, agency-structure, socio-constructionist approaches entail implicit dualisms in which the social is reified. In Cromby's words:

emphasizing the discursive-social at the expense of the embodied-material conceals, rather than addresses, Cartesian dualism. Indeed, tendencies within constructionism that do not acknowledge the embodied materiality of our existence, but instead consistently conflate discourse and materiality, may work to further entrench dualism since their very existence problematizes attempts to address it... implicitly treats all bodies as though they were identical, generates methodological errors, and furthers an ideological agenda that contradicts its own liberatory premises. Moreover, paradoxical as it might at first appear, by not explicitly engaging with the 'troublesome inner', constructionists have deferred, not transcended, Cartesian and agency-structure dualisms. (Cromby, 2004, p. 799 -800)

Overcoming dualisms seems to involve a great challenge, and this is an important issue since this dualism leads to the strong separation between biology and sociology as two independent disciplines that tend not to talk to each other. The result of this limitation, Lyon (1998) argues, is an unresolved dualism of structure and agency:

... while accepting that the cultural dimensions of emotions are an important subject of inquiry, wholly constructionist approaches can obscure our view of the phenomenon of emotion in the larger sense, that is, the understanding of the importance of emotion not only in culturally produced and mediated experience, but in social and bodily agency as conceived in terms of its foundation in social structures (1998, p. 43).

In socio-constructionism we find then two layers of reality, i.e. the socially constructed emotions and the biological body, and it is the social one that prevails over the biological one. What is needed in the study of emotions is to find how 'nature' and 'nurture' come together as part of complex historical processes of human beings.

### **The biological understanding of emotions in sociology**

In sociology, we also find an emphasis on the material, literal embodiment of emotions *in* the body. Notwithstanding the most common assumption of a sociological (socio-constructionist) approach to the study of emotions is the recognition of the social origin of emotions, this sociology of emotions engages in the effort of bridging the distance between biological and individualistic approaches and those that stress their social character. Turner and Stets (Stets, 2006; Stets and Turner, 2006b; Stets and Turner, 2006c; Turner, 2000; Turner, 2004; Turner, 2006a; Turner, 2007; Turner and Stets, 2005; Turner and Stets, 2006a; Turner and Stets, 2006b), focus on recognising the 'hardwired' elements of emotions as the material basis for then being able to understand the social aspects of emotions. These authors rely on the same premise as the psychological theories presented in the previous section, i.e. that the hardwired system *determines* what emotions essentially are and that the sociological work would add an

understanding of certain social and cultural aspects that contribute to the shaping, in a sort of minor way.

Turner and Stets argue that biology and biological conditions must form a component of theoretical explanations. In Turner and Stets's perspective (Stets and Turner, 2006a; Stets and Turner, 2006c; Turner, 2000; 2005; 2006a; 2006b), the dominant constructionist approach that considers "emotions as the product of culture" (Turner and Stets, 2006b, p. 46) in sociology, neglects biology in the study of emotions (Stets, 2006; Stets and Turner, 2006a; Stets and Turner, 2006c; Turner, 2000; Turner, 2006b; Turner and Stets, 2005; Turner and Stets, 2006a; Turner and Stets, 2006b). As they put it:

... sociological theorizing will need to explain how specific classes of emotions... [are] aroused under specific structural and cultural conditions and through specific biological and psychological processes. Thus, for all the progress in understanding emotional dynamics, sociological theorizing on emotions still has a long way to go. (Turner and Stets, 2006b, p. 49).

Turner and Stets aim at integrating the biological with the social. For Turner and Stets (2006) emotions developed through evolution and by the mechanisms of natural selection, and that is why a group of 'primary or hard-wired emotions' can be identified and studied. These emotions are: satisfaction-happiness, aversion-fear, assertion-anger and disappointment-sadness, "and perhaps others such as disgust, surprise, anticipation, excitement, and interest" (Turner and Stets, 2006b, p. 46). The combinations and variants of the basic emotions appear later as more elaborated, and according to the authors the main task of the sociology of emotions would be to theorise about this wider range of emotions, and to broaden the focus on the structural and cultural conditions in which they are produced. Nevertheless, even for the more complex forms of emotions, they assert, there is a neurological basis, as in the case of shame, guilt, jealousy, vengeance, and other emotions built on the basis of the few primary ones; what is more, all of them are prewired (Stets and Turner, 2006a; Turner and Stets, 2005).

From this perspective, sociological theorizing of emotions cannot ignore the biological basis and evolutionary forces that selected hominid and human neuro-anatomy (Turner and Stets, 2005, p. 46). Of course, in the end, social structure, culture, and socializing experiences have an impact on the particular ways in which emotions are expressed according to this approach. Emotions are therefore innate, and culture only conditions or 'shades' their expression in diverse societies. This is to say that for Turner and Stets (Stets, 2006; 2006a; 2006c; Turner, 2000; Turner, 2006b; 2005; 2006a; 2006b), it is important to firstly recognise the common grounds for human beings' emotional

capabilities, needs and expressions, and then to give culture the task of modifying them. In the tension between nature and nurture, Turner and Stets assume that 'nature' comes first: first emotions were hardwired, and then they were shaded by culture.

From that premise we can infer a second aspect of the 'nature' of emotions advocated here: emotions come first in every situation as there is a biological 'determination' of the possibilities of an emotion by nature, which is modified by 'nurture' or culture through the implicit or explicit ideologies and rules. To exemplify this presumption, because of the implicit separation between biology and society, when a person gets angry there seems to be a concrete *initial* biological reaction, which is 'expressed', 'modulated' or 'suppressed' according to the societal rules in which that particular person lives.

Turner (2000) rebuts the common belief that language and culture are humans' most unique characteristics by contending that emotional evolution was a precursor to the development of both spoken language and culture. In his view:

... long before hominids could speak with words, they communicated through body language their emotional dispositions; and it is the neurological wiring of the brain for these emotional languages that represented the key evolutionary breakthrough (Turner, 2000, p. xi).

According to Turner (2000), the six strands in which human evolution was influenced by the development of emotions are: (1) mobilisation and channelling of emotional energy, (2) attunement of interpersonal responses, (3) sanctioning, (4) moral coding, (5) valuing and exchanging resources, and (6) rational decision making. In short, emotions are linked not only to an individual's energising element, but also to the social, to moral and rational thinking. This particular approach to emotions presents an important difference from other evolutionary approaches. While in Darwin's perspective, emotions are a 'dying tribe' (Vygotsky, 1987a) simply a rudimentary reaction inherited from our ancestors in our animal existence, for Turner (2000), the development of emotions allowed the development of the very basic human features, for example, language. Thus, for him, emotional changes are the very basis of human development.

The theoretical separation between the biological and sociological levels allows Turner (2007) to produce the argument in such a way that the topic of biology can be overlooked. As Turner puts it:

I have written this book so that the topic of biology can be ignored, if the reader so desires. All that is necessary is to skip Chapter 2 where the evolutionary story of why humans became so emotional is told and where, in the appendix to this chapter,



the basic neuroanatomy of emotional arousal in humans is summarized.” (Turner, 2007, p. xi).

However, if the biological basis is so important for understanding the emergence of human beings, particularly the evolutionary process of emotions, the question here would be ‘why would it be acceptable to overlook that chapter?’ The implication seems to be that the biological and the social are not really intertwined, but only related as two strata with a causal, or at least unidirectional, relationship with each other. Overlooking biology has another implication, as then the sociological understanding and research about emotions in sociological terms would not involve a particular need to understand what happened in the biological realm. This raises questions about how biological understanding and sociological understanding are to inform each other. In some respects, one of my aims in this thesis is to reflect on this relationship with reference to Vygotsky’s theoretical apparatus.

In conclusion, in sociological perspectives that emphasise the evolutionary hardwiring of emotions, there is a discernible ‘naturalisation’ of emotions, i.e. the stress on the biological character, which in turn implies a unidirectionality of determination. This is to say that they recognise that biology has an impact on society, but not the other way round. In this sense, I am referring here to the fact that any ‘hardwiring’ only takes place in a social and cultural context. As a consequence there is a point in which it is not easy to approach the complexities of emotions as taking place in the body (albeit in a body that lives socially).

The sociological perspectives that deal with emotions as social (rather than biological) afford diverse approaches towards social life and the approaches they consider are part of a range of perspectives, such as dramaturgical theories (Turner and Stets, 2006b), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Fields, Copp and Kleinman, 2006), interaction ritual theories (Summers-Eiffer, 2006), power and status theories (Kemper, 2006), and exchange theories (Lawler and Thye, 2006). All these theories present the subjective aspect of emotions, not as an individual subjectivity, but rather, as a ‘social subjectivity’, or *inter*-subjectively constructed socially. From these sorts of analytic positions, the interest is in how individuals (as members of social groups) operate in a normative social order in which emotions are given significance and experienced as significant within a broad system of social order.

I argue that a change from a sociocultural approach implies understanding simultaneously the individual and the social character of emotions and thus the

inseparability of biology and society, as they dialectically transform each other. Turner and Stets (Stets and Turner, 2006b; Stets and Turner, 2006c; Turner and Stets, 2005; Turner and Stets, 2006a; Turner and Stets, 2006b), unlike other sociologists, actually discuss the biology of emotions. But they assume the biological realm is a closed system, as a defined almost literally hardwired structure that is independent of the *use* of such a hardwiring.

## **Wrapping up**

In this chapter, I presented a literature review about the study of emotions in sociology and I underlined the difficulties in accounting for both the ‘individual’ and the ‘social’ aspects of emotions concurrently. I have also underlined that to overcome dualisms represents a great challenge if we keep a strong separation between a biological study of emotions and their sociological study.

I have discussed certain concepts that emerged in sociological approaches: emotional labour, emotional capital and emotional geographies. All of these shed light on the fact that emotions are ‘shaped’ and have an impact in the participation of individuals in the social world. The fact that sociology captures the ‘adaptation’ of individuals to the social world allows us to give account of the variability of emotions in relation to cultures and history. This emphasis in sociology, I characterise as a process that works unidirectionally.

In the perspectives discussed, the emphasis relies on the way in which society and culture transform the biological body, i.e. the body, and thus emotions. I have argued that the implicit assumption of these positions make emotions fully dependent on cultural meanings, totally or mostly ‘erasing’ biological dependence, as if emotions were always ‘fit for (social) purpose’, and thus, as if they were always culturally functional, which is not the case. I argue that the body cannot be separated from its physical and social contexts any more than the individual can be separated from society. What is more, even in sociological perspectives that consider the importance of the ‘biological hardwire’, as it has become through evolution, we find a unidirectional determination, also, because the ‘hardwire’ preceeds human culture and history. Implicitly, these perspectives accept two layers of reality: ‘natural’ emotions, which can be studied by biology (or specifically by neuroscience) and ‘social’ emotions as they are studied by sociology). Here we find a dichotomy implicit in the development of two different sciences to study the same phenomenon, emotions. On the one hand, a

discipline that studies the 'hardwire' and on the other a discipline that studies the cultural and historical changes of emotions. The latter is the sociology of emotions while the former is a static discipline, neuroscience.

What is needed in the study of emotions is to find how nature and nurture come together as part of complex historical processes in human beings. I do not study 'the body' in terms of neuroscience, my study centres in finding evidence, through the study of microsituations to examine human actions in context, actions that could not be separated from 'the body'. For this reason, I argue, and develop in the following chapters, that it would be impossible to understand emotions if their study is split into individual and social.

## **Chapter 3 – Emotions in psychology**

It would seem short-sighted to look upon Vygotsky's socio-historical approach as past achievement rather than as guide to the present  
(Sylvia Scribner, 1985, p. 138)

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the discipline of psychology, and the kind of psychology that is needed to study emotions. I argue that in current perspectives there is not a unified approach to the study of emotions. Either emotions are studied as individual phenomena or they are studied as social phenomena. In that sense, I argue that there is a dualism in which the explanations of psychology focus either in one or the other without a clear continuity or relation. I also argue that Vygotsky offers a way to overcome such a dualist approach. In order to do this, first, I present current approaches in the study of emotions in psychology. Following this, I discuss the relevance of Vygotsky's criticisms to diverse approaches and his discussion of approaches to the study of emotions that are either solely physiological or solely interpretive and subjective. Vygotsky insights in these terms can still be useful to overcome the problematic of the separation between individual and social in contemporary approaches to the study of emotions.

Vygotsky does not offer a methodology or a detailed set of conceptual tools for studying emotions, because he did not engage in researching emotions. However, I argue that both his pursuit of a 'unified psychology' and of a historical approach to the study of psychological phenomena, constitute the basis for challenging dualist approaches. Vygotsky's unified aim implies an integrated view to study psychological phenomena without splitting their components arbitrarily and constructing various objects of study, i.e. consciousness, the unconscious or behaviour. His historical approach offers a 'moving picture' of psychological phenomena that forces research to face the difficulties in isolating emotions and context, and the different components of emotions involved in a particular situation. I argue that these two elements, unity and history, are helpful in the construction a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions. To focus in the classroom, I discuss another important concept in Vygotsky's psychological theory that can be useful for a sociocultural understanding of emotions in the classroom, namely the zone of proximal development.

## **Vygotsky and the study of emotions in individual and social psychology**

### ***Individualistic approaches to emotions***

Oatley points out that emotions have been studied so widely that “the quantity of publications in the field makes it impossible to be exhaustive” (Oatley, 2006, p. xxi). Although philosophers such as Aristotle, Stoics, Decartes and Spinoza reflected on emotions, and although Darwin discussed the continuity of emotional facial expressions between humans and animals (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006), their scientific study can be traced to the work of James and Lange (Vygotsky, 1999). Since then, two main tendencies have developed in the scientific study of emotions in psychology: the ‘somatic marker hypothesis’ and ‘philosophical cognitivism’ (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005; Winograd, 2003).

The somatic marker hypothesis, a contemporary perspective on emotions in neuroscience (Damasio, 1994, 1996), has its origins in Williams James’s study of emotions (1889). For James, emotions emerge from the body as human responses to the environment rooted in or led by biology, independently of or prior to the individual’s awareness or the social context in which emotions are ‘triggered’. This perspective is one on which most of neuroscience relies. Very importantly, emotions are viewed in the light of the continuity with and correlation to animal emotions (Lazarus, 2006). The second tendency explains emotions as individual responses that are related to personality and motivations, and emotions constitute subjective responses to the environment (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005; Winograd, 2003).

#### ***– The somatic marker hypothesis***

James puts forward a position that is exactly the opposite of the common sense view of emotions: “we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble” (James, 1884, p. 190). It is the body which is the origin of our emotions because “the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact” (James, 1884, pp. 189-190). This would imply that with fear (for example facing a lion in the wild) what “we feel is our heart beating, our skin cold, our posture frozen, or our legs carrying us away as fast as possible and then we realise we feel fear” (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006, p. 7). Emotions ensured that the individual ‘reacts’ to the environment. Later on, according to James (1884), bodily sensations received names by convention, and so, each of them was assigned a label. Thus, emotions were bodily responses to the environment and the social input consisted mostly of labelling

emotions. There was no involvement of anything close to ‘consciousness’ in emotions other than that.

Oatley and colleagues (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006, p. 8) consider that James has ‘guided’ contemporary psychology in two ways. Firstly, many of the emotions are experienced through changes of the autonomic nervous system, and in turn changes in the heart and blood vessels, the stomach and the sweat glands, which has opened a wide field of research. Secondly, James also anticipates an interest in research about how emotions colour human experience. James opened the door for a scientific study of emotions (Vygotsky, 1997b) and more generally he aimed to an immanent understanding of the mind, i.e. a mind which is not separated from the body.

Nevertheless, James’s (1884) arguments were questioned by Cannon (1927/1987) who found that different emotions activated the sympathetic nervous system in the same way (Vygotsky, 1999) as the ‘arousal response’ involved the release of adrenaline (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006). Cannon (1921/1987) found that changes in the heartbeat, the breath, and others, were specifically associated to particular emotions. On the contrary, peripheral changes were unspecific and they could be associated to a wide variety of emotional experiences, and particularly in certain subtleties of emotions, such as “gratitude, reverence, compassion, pity, love, devotion, desire, and pride” (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006, p. 121). Also, autonomic changes were identified in situations that were not linked to emotions (fevers, for example). Oatley and colleagues (2006) suggest that the speed of experiencing emotions is greater than that of the autonomic systems citing Janig’s (2003) study about embarrassment, as there are cases in which the autonomic responses are just not perceived by people (Canon 1927/1987, Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006), i.e. all human beings.

The somatic marker hypothesis, as it is known in contemporary psychology, considers emotions as “states of bodily arousal... detected by the brain as affect” (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005). ‘The basic’ emotions are studied in order to find common traits to all human beings (e.g. Masuyama, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1986). Affective neuroscience has followed a similar track in terms of the somatic origin of emotions. On the same basis as James, Panksepp (2005), in his critique against behaviourist approaches, argues that emotions and even consciousness rest in biology. The neurobiological origin of emotions is so crucial that he suggests that “a detailed neuroscientific understanding of basic human emotions may depend critically on understanding comparable animal emotions” (Panksepp, 2005, p. 31). For him, ethological studies, i.e. studies of animals

in their natural habitat, could offer the key to human emotions. Panksepp (2005) argues that:

human emotional feelings are critically dependent on primitive neural systems of the mammalian brain that coordinate instinctual actions, and these systems are quite comparably represented in the brains of all mammals. Basic emotions may need to be defined in terms of such neural system attributes... (Panksepp, 2005, p. 69)

Damasio (1994; 1999; 2003) also worked with this perspective. Emotions are changes in both body states –both the body proper as well as the brain– in response to different stimuli from the environment:

Emotion and feeling are part and parcel of the neural machinery for biological regulation, whose core is constituted by homeostatic controls, drivers and instincts (Damasio, 1994, p. 84)

‘Somatic markers’ are physiological signals that emerge in processes that regulate life. These ‘markers’ induce emotions, and influence organism responses to stimuli (Damasio, 1994). Eventually, emotions with their corresponding bodily change come to be associated with particular situations and their outcomes in the past. That is why emotions bias decision-making towards certain behaviours while avoiding others (Damasio, 1994).

The somatic markers “relate to body-state structure and regulation even when they do not arise in the body proper but rather in the brain’s representation of the body” (Damasio, 1996, p. 1413). Some responses are explicit, i.e. conscious or ‘in mind’, and some of them are implicit, non-conscious (which escape the reach of consciousness). Damasio (1994) explains that there are two pathways for the somatic marker responses. First, emotions are induced by changes in the body proper and projected to the brain (as in the example of the lion, mentioned above). Second, cognitive representations of emotions are activated in the brain, but without being directly elicited by a physiological response. He calls this pathway the “as-if body loop” (for example, when we imagine a lion), although responses can be much weaker. This second path is an anticipation produced in the brain, and constitutes a useful evolutionary resource that helps the preparation of the body to respond faster to external stimuli without waiting for an event to actually occur.

Damasio’s (1993) study of emotions links with both reasoning and decision-making processes, and so he helps to bridge the gap traditionally drawn between rational thinking and the supposed ‘irrationality’ of emotions. He and his colleagues (Anderson *et al.*, 1999; Bechara and Damasio, 2005; Bechara *et al.*, 1999; Damasio, 1994;

Damasio, 1999; Damasio, 2003) have worked extensively with patients with prefrontal cortex damage, through which they established the significance of emotions in neurological functioning. For Damasio:

reasoning evolved as an extension of the automatic emotional system, with emotion playing diverse roles in the reasoning process. For example, emotions may increase the saliency of a premise and, in so doing, bias the conclusion in favour of the premise. (Damasio, 1994, p. 11)

First, Damasio (1994) found that emotions participate in the process of pondering among options from which to decide, but later, he found that they participate in young people's learning of social conventions and ethical rules (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007).

Damasio (1994) makes a distinction between emotions and *feelings*: feelings are conscious and they are built on the physical emotion, while emotions are basically non-conscious, and thus not available to awareness. Emotions become feelings when they come into consciousness, and according to him, this is the result of complex collections of chemical and neural responses that integrate a particular pattern (Damasio, 1994). An important aspect of Damasio's (1994; 1999) approach is the affordance of a 'consciousness' in the process of emotions. This move illustrates a link between his approach, founded on the somatic marker hypothesis which grounds the origin of emotions in the body, and the appraisal tradition in psychology, which underlined the importance of appraising I explain in the following subsection.

– ***Appraisal theories of emotion or philosophical cognitivism***

Philosophical cognitivism (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005) considers that 'somatic markers' are actually detected by the brain, and become what are commonly known as 'emotions' (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005). Thus, emotions are not so much the 'bodily reactions', but the representations of the stimulus situation (Prinz, 2004a; Prinz, 2004b). Appraisal is nothing but awareness and evaluation, or 'evaluative judgments' (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006; Williams and Bendelow, 1998a) of the changes that occur in the body (Frijda, 2006; Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus, 2006; Smith and Lazarus, 1993). The main distinction from the 'somatic marker hypothesis' is that appraisal theories focus on the appraisal process, i.e. on the cognitive and conscious aspects of emotions. These latter theories assume that human beings are constantly appraising.

Although it is also an individualistic approach, this perspective gives the subject a more active role, by acknowledging that individuals not only react to the environment, but



that they exercise certain subjective 'activity'. Lazarus characterises his theory of emotions as cognitive, motivational, and relational (Lazarus, 2006). It is cognitive because it is the representation of the emotions in the individual's awareness that gives sense and shape to emotions. This means that emotions are built consciously and subjectively. Lazarus's (2006) theory is also motivational, as it considers the person's desires and motives as important aspects that shape emotions, i.e. the individual's goals and aspirations (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006). For Lazarus, emotions are relational as they "always depend on what transpires between a person and the environment, which most importantly consists of other persons" (2006, p. 10). In this approach, emotions "relate to the outer world and the inner self" (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006, p. 168).

Emotions are developed through four processes: appraising, coping, the flow of action and reactions, and relational meaning. Appraising has to do with becoming aware in terms of "imputing relational meaning to our ongoing and changing relationships with others and the physical environment, and it is this meaning that shapes and defines our emotions" (2006, p. 10). Coping, the second process, refers to the management and adaptation to the environment, and the emotions that such adaptations generate in the individual through actions in the world. Human transactions with the world entail cognition, motivation and emotions. In this manner, actions and reactions flow within human interpersonal exchanges.

The third process, flow, is what creates emotions or changes in already existing emotions:

It is usually an action of some sort that precipitates an emotion sequence. We might call the action the provocation of the emotion. Even the absence of an action when it is expected or desired can be a provocation (Lazarus, 2006, p. 14)

The appraising process implies an element of personal significance, whereby this significance is relational (Frijda, 1986, 2001; Lazarus, 1991; Planalp, 1999). Lazarus also considers emotions in a biological way as facilitators, or sometimes like hurdles in the evolutionary process of warm-blooded animals. As a consequence, in this perspective, a set of discrete 'basic emotions' is defined, all of which involve a relational meaning. For example, shame involves "having failed to live up to an ego-ideal" (Lazarus, 2006, p. 16). All in all, the appraisal perspective on emotions underlines the importance of the constructed meaning or interpretation of emotions through awareness.

In these two perspectives, the social remains only or mostly as a variable that affects the biological plane, and the complexity of the way in which culture modifies biology is not fully depicted. There are, however, some psychological approaches that emphasize what society gives to emotions.

### ***Social psychological approaches to the study of emotions***

Although ‘cultural psychology’ has developed in the last three decades (Cole, 1996; Heine, 2008; Kitayama, 2007; Ratner, 1997; Shweder, 1990; Stigler, Shweder and Herdt, 1990; Valsiner, 2007), generally, the idea of linking culture and psychology is not at all a common tendency in psychology (Cole, 1996). Cultural psychology is:

... the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unit for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion (Shweder, 1999, p. 1)

Regarding culture and society in relation to emotions, Griffiths and Scarantino (2005) maintain that it is necessary to build a situated approach to emotions. They consider that emotions are designed to function in *social contexts* as they are often an act of relationship, with which a social signal is given to others. According to these authors, emotions constitute skilful engagements with the world that do not need to be mediated by conceptual thought; rather, they are scaffolded by the environment as they unfold in a particular situation, and throughout the process of acquisition of an ‘emotional repertoire’, particularly by children (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005). Also, emotions are dynamically coupled to particular environments, which influence and are influenced by the unfolding emotion (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005). An organism ‘probes’ their environment through initial emotional responses and monitors other organisms’ responses to determine how emotions evolve. We can see in these approaches an inseparable link between individuals and the environment of which they are a part. This view offers a basic framework to deal with the relations between emotions and society, although it is not fully developed, and most importantly, the authors’ claims are not based on an empirical study.

However, there are psychological studies of emotions which consider the impact of culture (Frijda and Mesquita, 1994; Kitayama and Cohen, 2007; Kitayama and Markus, 1994a; Markus and Kitayama, 1994b; Mesquita and Ellsworth, 2001; Mesquita and Leu, 2007; Shweder, 1993). Mesquita and Frijda (1992) concluded that it is not possible

to state either a global cross-cultural universality of emotions, or their cultural determination for all the components and moments of emotions processes; however these researchers maintain that emotions are basically universal in terms of the set of emotional reaction modes (modes of action readiness, facial expressions, voice intonations, and others), the existence of some measure of emotion and expression control, issues of emotional concern and particular events linked to such issues of concern which arouse emotions (such as loss, rejection and rivalry). Furthermore, Mesquita and Frijda consider that “across cultures, the same appraisal dimensions appear to distinguish the different types of emotions” (Mesquita and Frijda, 1992, p. 198). On the other hand, there are cultural differences whose main source seems to be related to both restrictive and prescriptive regulation processes (Mesquita and Frijda, 1992). These processes differ in terms of cultural display and feeling rules, and thus behaviours and expressions associated with emotions. There are cultural differences in the appraisal propensities related to the particularities of cultures, such as tendencies in the way in which events or moral values are perceived (Mesquita and Frijda, 1992). Additionally, differences in taxonomies of emotion words sometimes reflect cultural differences in emotion (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006). Kitayama and Markus’ (Kitayama, Markus and Kurokawa, 2000; Kitayama and Markus, 1994a; Kitayama and Markus, 1994b; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Markus and Kitayama, 1994a; Markus and Kitayama, 1994b). In general, the idea that culture, and in particular the norms related to emotions, are important in relation to emotional experience has gained acceptance, and comparative studies among cultures have been undertaken based on this approach (Kitayama, Markus and Kurokawa, 2000).

Finally, the social aspect of emotions has also been investigated in studies of child development. For example, Holodyski and Friedlmeier (2005) tested a model of internalisation of emotions based on the idea that during childhood, emotional expression decreases in situations in which emotions serve only self-regulation. The test results showed that although the self-reported feeling remains, children’s expression of their feelings decreased in solitary conditions as a function of increasing age, while in interpersonal conditions both expression and feeling remained stable. There also seems to be a positive correlation with age in the conceptual ability to discriminate between expression and feeling.

I argue that these approaches are based on the presumption that a biological realm has an independent and *previous* existence from the social in human psychology. Thus, it is

difficult to integrate the individual and social aspects of emotions. In the approaches mentioned above the social aspect seems to be important in relation to some of the elements for understanding emotions, such as in relation to the kind of social situations in which certain emotions emerge, and the way in which emotions are ‘shaped’ or expressed according to rules for feelings (which relates also to Hochschild’s, 2003, work). However, these approaches do not question the idea of a biological realm that pre-exists and is defined regardless of the social emergence of human emotions. For this reason, even in psychological approaches that are keen to consider the way in which emotions are both individual and social, it is difficult to understand how the two aspects interact. It may be possible, I argue, that in order to solve this separation between the individual and social aspects of emotions, the analysis of moment-by-moment real-time transactions can shed some light on the ways in which the emergence of emotions ‘in the body’ adjusts from the onset to the ‘constraints’ and ‘affordances’ of immediate cultural environments (Parkinson, 2012) and that biological and cultural aspects of emotions could never be neatly separated.

In my search for a solution to the indivisibility of the individual and social aspects of emotions, I found in Vygotsky’s work not only a historical view, but an attempt to build a ‘unified psychology’, which implies a study of emotions that did not split them into different disciplines in order to be studied.

### ***The relevance of Vygotsky***

Vygotsky’s largest study about emotions, at least in the literature in English (Silvonen, 2009), is *The teaching about emotions* (Vygotsky, 1999), which constitutes a literature review for his own teaching. Leontiev (1997) suggests that this work merely represents an analysis of Descartes’ teachings about the passions. I argue, however, that Vygotsky’s study represents more than that: it establishes the philosophical grounds on which the study of emotions would need to be undertaken. Much of it deals with a critical analysis of how such a study should *not* be assumed, through the discussion of the state of the art in the study of emotions at his time. His analysis, then, offers important clues to how a sociocultural approach to the study of emotions could be undertaken. I also argue that his critique and his suggestions of how to solve the issues he maps still have relevance for the study of emotions nowadays.

Vygotsky (1999) shows that the entire history of psychology “is contained in Descartes” (Blunden, 2009, p. 1) and he sets out the philosophical grounds for the theoretical study

of emotions. Descartes' teaching about the passions are "– to use a musical term – the basic theme with respect to which all contemporary psychology is nothing other than a variation that carries and develops" (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 93) that theme. Vygotsky's analysis goes bar by bar in a very slow crescendo which aims to give the final blow to Cartesian psychologies. On the one hand, James-Lange's organic theory, on the other, descriptive approaches to the study of emotions (Dilthey, 1988, for example), represent the extreme poles of the duality encapsulated in Descartes's philosophical system three centuries before. Theories are "either a psychology of passions of a soulless robot or a psychology of independent emotions of lifeless spirits" (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 108) without a body.

James (1884) and Lange (1922) developed a visceral organic materialist theory of emotions. Emotions emerge in the peripheral system as a response to the environment. Vygotsky (1999) criticises James's understanding, the 'mental' aspect of emotions (the consciousness of emotions) is superfluous, as emotions have an existence independent of mental life, because James consider that they are only physiologically defined. For James and Lange, emotions are not affected by our interpretation or understanding either of the situation, or of what is 'felt'. However, James (1884) also recognised that humans have other kinds of emotions, characterised as moral, intellectual and aesthetic feelings, which "affect us with a pleasure that seems ingrained in the very form of the representation itself, and borrow nothing from any reverberation surging up from the parts below the brain" (James, 1884, p. 201). Body visceral emotions and the 'high-level' intellectual and aesthetic feelings that emerge, have nothing to do with each other. The two kinds of emotions are part of two parallel routes that never cross (Vygotsky, 1999). This parallelism entails a dualism as there are two substances that live in two different substrates and do not affect each other, and so two substances whose understanding would need two different approaches.

The 'solidifying empiricism' that underpins James's (1884) and Lange's (1922) visceral theory coincides with Descartes. Emotions are ruled by mechanic laws, thus becoming reflexive or reactive. The feelings of these emotions cannot be other than passive 'sensations' (Vygotsky, 1999). "The constantly present and sometimes dominating impulsive character of emotional experience" (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 39) is missing. For example, the use of counting to 'control' anger 'impulses' was explained in terms of the disappearance over time of the physiological discharges (James, 1884; Vygotsky, 1999).

Consciousness was left aside, and reflexion or goals were not part of the explanation of the working through emotions.

This type of materialistic theory of emotions refers “to the most remote, prehistorical, prehuman period of mental evolution” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 72). Furthermore, no history is possible when emotions are reduced to physiology, because physiology does not change and it is independent from culture and ‘mind’. Vygotsky states:

Lange and James wanted very much to find the key to a historical explanation of emotions. However, they could not do this just as the great Descartes...could not. Obviously, the anti-historical tendency that paralyzed all attempts of investigators moving to that direction was established in the logic of the theory itself (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 72)

The achievement of the visceral approach it to open for the first time the road for a scientific theory of emotions, and represents a real alternative to existing mentalist approaches.

On the other hand, a descriptive psychology that Wundt (1921) identified when psychology was born, developed the other side of the Cartesian duality, according to Vygotsky (1999b). Their ‘descriptive’ approach emphasised the active aspect of emotions, the description of the complex ‘higher mental processes specific to [hu]man [beings]’, or, as Vygotsky put it, their ‘spirit’(Vygotsky, 1999). The orientation to the intentionality in human life was like a breath of fresh air in view of a naturalistic science that had laid down their weapons at the feet of physiology. A descriptive teleological psychology was “undoubtedly right in criticizing explanatory psychology of this kind” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 65). However, this kind of psychology survived only due to the failures of explanatory psychology (Vygotsky, 1999); and what is more, supporters of descriptive psychology did not rejected explanatory psychology (Vygotsky, 1999). They actually considered that explanatory psychology had a place. In Dilthey’s words “nature we explain; mental life we understand” (1924, p. 34, cited by Vygotsky, 1999, p. 65), which implies that they accepted a place for physiological psychology (which would be then a ‘natural’ kind of science), independent of the complexity of the human mind. Vygotsky derides their implicit credo: ‘to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s’ (Vygotsky, 1999). Once more, in this opposite approach consciousness and more generally ‘mental life’ would be separated from the body. A parallelism, a dualism, is also created in descriptive teleological psychology, in Vygotsky’s words:

... partisans [of descriptive psychology] seemingly standing at a diametrically opposite point of view and justifiably ridiculing the inconsistencies of causal analysis of the essentially explanatory Cartesian psychology, themselves not only

have not moved very far from those theoretical assumptions that inevitably lead to these absurdities, but wholly and completely share and adopt the same assumptions (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 65)

Descriptive psychology took the mind as “a totally isolated realm of reality in which no material laws are active and which is a pure kingdom of the spirit” (Vygotsky, 1997a, p. 111). Nevertheless, the merit of this approach is the recognition of a history for emotions, i.e. that emotions change over time, which is expressed in the fact that changes can be traced descriptively. Also, this approach has the merit of recognising the complexities of the ‘human spirit’.

The implicit Cartesian foundation in the two polar perspectives made them unable to embrace simultaneously the physiological aspect of emotions and their vital teleological and ‘spiritual’ character. Although this sounds paradoxical, Vygotsky explains the reason for this:

Cartesian teaching disintegrated into a series of separate conceptions and directions that, as they are developed by separate investigators or in separate psychological systems, are, in external form, seemingly independent, logically complete, isolated streams of scientific thought, sharply contrasted with other streams that have their beginning in the same Cartesian source and are often engaged in an irreconcilable struggle... separate, independent, and mutually inimical theoretical directions of psychological thought. This is why we do not find in any of the contemporary psychological systems a complete and entire embodiment of Cartesian teaching. Everywhere there are pieces, everywhere, only parts of the internally split, grandiose construction of this teaching (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 93)

Vygotsky (1987b; 1997b; 1999) presents the way in which Cartesian thought has pervaded the two psychologies at his time, which could be summarised in the fact that there is no single understanding about emotions that embraces all sort of emotions as a unity, and there are two different explanations according to the perspective undertaken, and the emphasis that such a perspective offers: either physiology or the richness of the emotional experience. I argue that even in contemporary psychology this is an inescapable frame of thinking, and Vygotsky expresses a problem that we continue to face:

the opposite poles of contemporary psychology are internally united with each other and presume each other, that their combination goes back to Descartes... the father of mechanistic psychology and spiritualistic psychology ” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 95)

The dichotomy that I aim to emphasize both in sociological and psychological approaches is the dichotomy found in the study of individual and social aspects of emotions. However, the problem is not solved by finding the mutual impact of ‘the mind’ in ‘the body’, the complexity of the problem needs to be reframed by not splitting

the study of emotions into two different realms, in this case, individual and social. Emotions emerge in an embodied mind and a minded body, but ‘the mind’ is first social and then individual. The experience of individual emotions takes place while individuals are part of a social world. I will make this clearer later.

In Vygotsky’s argument, he resorts to Spinoza, who had developed the antithesis to parallelism, and so to Descartes’ dualism (Vygotsky, 1999). Derived from Spinoza’s teachings, Vygotsky explains that the complexity in understanding emotions has nothing to do with the dyad of ‘soul-body’, but with the “relation between passions and thinking and between cognitive and emotional elements of our mental life” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 89). This distinction has two characteristics. First, there is not an essential difference between these two aspects of our ‘mental life’; their difference, on the contrary, is functional, and complex. Second, the relations between passions and thinking is not detached from the struggles lived in our life as such, i.e. in our social life. In other words, working through emotions is a struggle that is part of the struggle of our lives as we live in a social world. Understanding the complex relation that thinking, and thus consciousness, has with passions, opens a totally new direction for the study of emotions. For Vygotsky, Spinoza’s unity makes possible the breakthrough from the forceful dualisms characterised above.

I argue that the difficulty in integrating the individual and social aspects of emotions is the result of the fact that a separation is often established from the start between what those individual and social aspects of emotions are. This is where I consider that a dualism resides for current approaches to emotions and this is why I resorted to Vygotsky and his argumentation presented above to start the critique, but also, the development of the unity in his terms, that I present below, in order to bridge the gap between both sorts of aspects of emotions. All in all, the study of emotions would need to avoid beginning with the creation of a gap between the individual and the social aspects of emotions.

### **The development of a sociocultural understanding of emotions**

In order to study emotions as simultaneously individual and social, I consider that Vygotsky offers two important strategic elements in his study of other psychological traits: a unified approach to the study of psychological phenomena and their historical study. The unified approach is implied in Vygotsky’s suggestion that a unified psychology, The Psychology, would need to be constituted as a discipline that could



embrace all sorts of phenomena whether in relation to behaviour, consciousness or the unconscious. A historical approach to the study of emotions would imply that they change over time and particularly that they are part of an open system that is transformed in a humanised world. I will explain these two elements in the sub-sections that follow.

### ***Vygotsky's agenda of a general psychology***

Vygotsky's (1997b) suggestion regarding the need for a 'general psychology' offers a theoretical context within which he hints an approach for the study of emotions would need to be built. A general psychology would be a discipline analogous to the role of biology in relation to botany, zoology, microbiology, and other life sciences. Vygotsky (1997a) underlines that applied psychologies, which aim to solve practical problems, were the first sub-disciplines of psychology to point to the need for establishing the foundations for explaining psychological phenomena in a comprehensive manner. A general psychology would embrace all the areas defined for the study of 'the mind': (1) consciousness, (2) behaviour, and (3) the unconscious (i.e. what is unconscious), in each field, as much in developmental psychology as in clinical or educational psychology.

In contemporary psychology, there is not yet a discipline of this kind. On the contrary, we find the three realms, consciousness, behaviour and the unconscious, treated by diverse psychological systems, which are independent from each other and which even deny each other. A general psychology is not a mixture of everything joined together through the conjunction 'and' to a simplistic eclecticism (Vygotsky, 1997b).

The study of emotions, based on the idea of a comprehensive psychology, would then need to be understood as part of a wide view to 'the mental'. Therefore, the study of emotions would need to be based on explaining what emotions become in human life considering the role of consciousness, but also the relations between emotions and behaviour and the unconscious. The study of only one of these aspects would be and has been insufficient and even misleading, because partial approaches have ignored some of the elements involved in the process of emotions.

The idea of an embracing approach to emotions is not easy to solve, as has been long argued from Wundt to contemporary researchers in sociocultural psychology (e.g. Cole, 1996). The distinction between a descriptive and an explanatory psychology splits the different psychologies into two broad types of science. Aiming to offer a physiological explanation to emotions at the margins of society leaves aside a basic aspect of the

constitution of human emotions, which is the social life. Stressing only the role of consciousness and social life in the constitution of emotions can make emotions seem either completely shaped by the cultural rules or controllable by free will, leaving the startling or disquieting character of emotions at the margins. This is one of the reasons for which issues involved in the understanding of emotions are complex.

### ***The importance of history in Vygotsky's work***

The study of emotions also involves the consideration of both the continuity and the breakage between the natural phylogenetic history of emotions, and their social and cultural history. A historical approach aims to understand how things change and are transformed from one 'thing' to 'another'. Change implies both continuity and rupture and often two 'things' that seem to have a different quality may appear as independent or unrelated. Unless we can explain processes of change, we cannot understand how it is that we have two elements with a different quality and how it is possible that they relate to each other. Emotions such as compassion or solidarity have developed in human beings in a historical manner.

Certainly, emotions are not isolated from life, but they are part of it. If the transformation and emergence of 'new' human emotions, 'higher' ones, cannot be explained, the explanation leads often to the construction of parallel universes which are independent from each other. In the study of emotions we need to understand what changes take place in mental life, and so in life, that allow the transformation and emergence of higher emotions, and even more, the way in which the lower emotions are transformed by the emergence of the 'higher' ones.

According to Scribner (1985), Vygotsky refers to history (i.e. 'human' history) at different levels: general history, ontogeny or individual development, and microhistory. In addition, there is the history of development of higher psychological functions and the history of cultural development of particular societies. Although for this research, my focus is on microhistory, an overview to other levels of history is important to understand the time context in which microhistory takes place.

Other levels of history could be relevant to offer an overview of Vygotsky's uses of history. However, I only discuss the levels that I consider relevant to my argument, i.e. general history, ontogeny or individual development, and particularly microhistory, which is the level of history in which microsituations can be identified.

– *General history*

In relation to the first level of history, general history, Scribner (1985) states that Vygotsky aims to unravel the mechanisms by which “the transformation from the natural to the historical takes place in the phenomena of mental life” (Scribner, 1985, p. 121). As I noted above, Vygotsky (1999) dedicates his main manuscript regarding this issue to discuss the difficulties that both empirical-physiological psychologists (James and Lange) and speculative-phenomenological psychologies (Dithey) had understanding *higher emotions*, and their link with *elementary emotions* (see my previous discussion on these issues in the sections above). Psycho-physiological approaches grasp the continuity of emotions through different species, relying on evolution for the understanding of emotions. However, they fail to capture the role of culture in human emotions and, more generally, the role of consciousness and teleology in their development. On the other hand, speculative-phenomenological-idealist psychologies understood the *sui generis* character of human emotions and the importance of interpretations, which are embedded into cultural frameworks. Nevertheless, they fail to acknowledge the role of ‘biological laws’ (Scribner, 1985, p. 122 discusses this issue in relation to other higher mental functions). The complexity of this issue, however, is that ‘biological laws’ function, in the case of human beings, as part of their participation in social life. We are social beings from the beginning our lives, otherwise, we would never survive (Cole and Cole, 2001). Furthermore, culture has a Lamarckian effect. Lamarck (1914) sustained that characteristics acquired by an organism during their lifetime could be passed to its offsprings by inheritance. Although in biology his theories were discarded long ago, in culture, this effectively happens, as not only behaviours are passed from one generation to the next one, but also a humanised material world populated by tools and more generally, by artefacts.

Traces of culture, i.e. learned behaviours, that are passed from one generation to another in certain animals (for example McGrew, 1998) as lately the development of epigenetics has shown in the study of mechanisms that organisms passed transgenerationally as response to environmental factors without changes in the genotype (Jablonka and Lamb, 1989; Jablonka and Lamb, 2002; Jablonka and Lamb, 2014; Jablonka, Lamb and Avital, 1998; Jablonka and Raz, 2009). However, the way in which passing learned behaviours to the offsprings for human beings is of a much higher level, because it is not only in terms of behaviours, but also in terms of tools (including symbolic tools) and artefacts.

There are three issues highlighted by Vygotsky (1925/1999) that are fundamental to the role of culture in understanding human behaviour. First, the inherited experience of human beings is much broader, as we draw on the experience of former generations, which is what he refers to as historical experience. Also, there is social experience (the experience of other people), i.e. experience that is added by knowing what others do or have done. Finally, in contrast to animals, human behaviour takes new forms, as we actively adapt to the environment, and, in doing so, transform ourselves. Vygotsky emphasizes that transformation of materials through the movements of human hands takes place first in an anticipated manner as imagination, which “models, as it were, these movements and materials” (Vygotsky, 1925/1999). This imagining or planning, as much as this manipulative and transformative acting is something Vygotsky (1925/1999) refers to as a ‘doubled experience’, which is then different than in animals. For this reason, human emotions are neither regulated by biological evolution, nor ‘natural’ laws as such; emotions are regulated (as higher mental functions are) by ‘historical laws’, and these ‘laws’ are “the key to discovering the development of higher forms of behaviour” (Scribner, 1985, p. 122).

Scribner (1985) finds two consequences of embracing a historical approach. The first is that ‘human nature’ changes as it is produced by socially organised activities – the activities change in history, and thus they cannot be described as completed and ‘finished’, but are always developing. Paraphrasing Scribner, understanding what emotions are cannot be separated from how emotions become what they are (Scribner, 1985). Through ‘general history’ the synthesis between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ in psychology is achieved (Scribner, 1985; Toulmin, 1979). For this reason, issues related to “genesis thus move to the forefront of the scientific enterprise” (Scribner, 1985, p. 122), and the understanding of the nature of human emotions has to do then with the formation and transformation of emotions. The second consequence of embracing a historical approach is that changes in social activities that take place in history have directionality (Scribner, 1985), i.e. they involve intentions. Therefore, new ways of experiencing-performing-working through emotions are built on previous achievements in humankind’s consciousness and behaviour in relation to emotions. Also, there is potentially openness in the future of emotions, as the ways in which they are shaped, and changes do not come as a consequence that is already pre-set. In any case, a particular regulation in the expression and feeling of emotions is aimed for and worked

for and past human accomplishments become resources for the current life and become ‘natural’ in that particular context (Cole, 1996).

All in all, the development of emotions needs to be studied through the investigation of historical rather than only biological processes. The overall implication of a historical approach for the study of emotions is the change in perspective. Finally, although the cultural system, and its implied teleology, are a relatively recent phenomenon in human evolution, human emotions need to be studied in relation to history and culture, as there is not a ‘nature’ of human emotions that is independent of history. Emotions *are* what they are becoming through history. Studying emotions thus requires a methodology that goes beyond their study as biological functional phenomena, but in which the biological functions are acknowledged. Vygotsky’s discussion regarding general history has an important theoretical function in confronting dualist positions, as well as in the path to ‘establish the main directions’ (Scribner, 1985, p. 125) for overcoming the shortcomings of dualistic psychological approaches to the study of emotions.

– *Ontogeny*

The second level of history studied by Vygotsky is the subject’s individual history or the history of the child (Vygotsky, 1987c, cited by Scribner, 1985) . In this regard, Vygotsky (1986) focuses on the same issue as in his analysis of general history: the ‘uniquely human aspects of behaviour’ (Vygotsky, 1978, cited by Scribner, 1985). Scribner underlines that

on the individual level of organization, as well as on the species level, two lines of development must be distinguished – the biological (sometimes referred to as natural) and the cultural (Scribner, 1985, p. 124)

Children are born at a particular phylogenetic moment, as well as at a particular cultural-historical moment that depends on the time and place in which a child is born, both of which have an impact in children particular ontogenetic development. Emotions are a part of this individual development. The development of a particular child in relation to emotions is linked not only to the biological transformation of the child’s body into ‘adulthood’, but to the culture in which she participates.

With respect to human ontogeny, one cannot say that first comes the phylogenetic part and then comes the cultural part and the individual part. All are there from the outset (Cole, 1996, p. 214)

Indeed, this occurs in the whole life of an individual; emotions are worked through and shaped throughout individuals’ lives. A consequence of this is that adults’ individual

development continues in terms of emotions much later than the biological ‘adulthood’ take place, but the biological functioning is implied. For example, in a particular culture, a mature adult might learn new ways to cope with anger, which were not available to him when he was a young adult. This goes beyond the development of the body and the body achievement of ‘maturity’.

In the case of children’s development, however, ontogeny does not recapitulate general history. This is to say that the development of individuals, does not repeat human history (Scribner, 1985; Cole, 1996), neither in relation to emotions. Psychological achievements in relation to emotions in phylogenesis are represented in child development and also in adult development. However, this development is not a repetition of the development of emotions in human history (Vygotsky 1966, quoted by Scribner, 1985). Scribner (1985) quotes Vygotsky’s summary of this issue: “to base oneself on ethnopsychological data does not mean to transpose them directly to the doctrine of ontogenesis” (Vygotsky, 1966, p. 38, quoted by Scribner, 1985, p. 131). The history of the child implies on the one hand a process of assimilation or internalisation of ways of working through emotions; on the other hand, it also implies externalisation and active participation in the social world while working through those emotions. The history of humans involves the same two processes, but presumably in social terms there is a different weight in the creation of ways of dealing with emotions, as it happens in relation to the creation of languages and cultures (Rogoff, 1990; Scribner, 1985).

Vygotsky showed that the source of higher mental functions did not originate in biology, but in social life because “the relations between the higher mental functions were at one time real relations among people” (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 37). He summarised this idea as a genetic law of cultural development by stating that:

any function in the child’s cultural development appears on the stage twice, on two planes, first among people as an intermental category and then within the child as an intramental category (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 40)

His studies on higher forms of behaviour, particularly language, show that those higher functions originate in social relations among people. Children internalise what they experience as they participate in the social world (Vygotsky, 1987; Rogoff, 1990). This means that at the basis of ontogenetic history is social life and social activity, and not biology. In this way, child development is not explained through a pure link with

phylogenesis, i.e. evolutionary changes of the species, but through the understanding of sociogenesis (Vygotsky, 1991).

At the level of child development (ontogenetic history), and due to the dependence of children on adults, children also receive an implicit or explicit approach to their prospective futures from their carer(s). The teleology that parents and adults provide to children and young people has been called ‘prolepsis’ (Cole, 1996), and it involves offering directions to children’s development. This direction can be explicit or implicit. In terms of emotions, for example, expressions like “count to ten” or “when life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life that you have a thousand reasons to smile”. Implicitly, in a particular culture the possibility of mixing together work and enjoyment (pleasure) might be an imperative; while in another one, a certain type of emotional detachment becomes the blueprint for the way in which emotions should be shaped at work. What is most important to stress is that the process of ‘enculturation of emotions’ is taken for granted within a particular culture and thus, the way in which emotions are shaped is considered as the *natural development* of a particular emotion.

Therefore, the definition of ends and so the way in which emotions ‘should’ develop is not unidirectional. It is not the case that adults define the aim of emotions and this leads the process in which child’s emotions develop. Children are active agents in the negotiation of their own development. This is especially important in the transition from childhood to adulthood, a period of life in which

psychologists are most likely to emphasize intergenerational conflict, changes in both the behavior and personality of the developing young person that are perceived by adults as destructive (e.g., high levels of behavior considered criminal or immoral, high suicide rates) (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009, p. 136)

At this stage, adolescence, cultural creation and questioning is “likely to be most prominent, giving birth to the new while diminishing, if not extinguishing, the old” (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009, p. 136), at least in Western informed cultures. In this, I follow Engestrom’s (1996), when he sustains that development is not always functional with the intentions of previous generations. Indeed, transformation is brought about by adolescents in the shape of resistance and rebellion towards the establishment. In this way, ontogeny does not follow a course predefined by previous generations, in spite of being informed by those changes. Research into social movements has pointed at this innovative and transformational character of ontogenetic or individual development, when they point out to the fact that adolescents have led a number of social movements in search of social change (Sherrod, Flanagan, Kassimir, & Syvertsen, 2006).

– *Microhistory*

I refer to microhistory as the history that take places over short periods of time (Cole, 1996). At this level, interactions occur when the development or unfolding of the present time takes place. Taking a microhistorical stance to the study of emotions involves seeing them as situated and constituted in social settings and micro activities, rather than having and existence outside of those activities. Time has different paces according to the scale to which we refer, in microhistory, the time is short, usually from some seconds to some few minutes, and it is the time in which tasks that are part of an activity take place. Microhistory can also be referred as interactional time, however, not only interactions take place during this short periods of time. Interactions are a part of the actions involved in the realisation of a particular an activity (Leontiev, 1974).

The concept of microhistory that I introduce here differs from the concept of microgenesis used by Vygotsky in relation to his experimental research (Wertsch, 1985). According to Wertsch (1985), Vygotsky used microgenesis in two senses. Firstly, Vygotsky uses it in order to study “the critical time when a reaction appears and when its functional links are established and adjusted” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 68). Thus, microgenesis refers to the lapse of time in which the formation of psychological processes takes place. This concept, however, involves the idea of engaging in repeated observations in in very short-term longitudinal fashion (Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky interest in microgenesis was subordinated in this case to the understading of ontogeny, i.e. the development of an individual, in order to capture the process of transformation of a particular psychological function.

Vygotsky uses microgenesis in a second fashion, to refer to “the unfolding of an individual perceptual or conceptual act, often for the course of milliseconds.” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 55). In this case, Vygotsky was interested in capturing specific transformations (one of them for example, the movement from thought to speech utterance as Wertsch, 1985 indicates). In this second sense, the lapse of time is extremely short, and Vygotsky was more interested in the study of specific processes in microgenetic terms, and in spite to his sociogenetic approach, he referred again to the way in which those microgenetic analysis contributed to ontogeny. Neither of the two concepts of microgenesis points to the lapses of time to which I point here. Microhistory refers to periods that go from some seconds to some minutes, in which people participate in a task, and as part of this, in which they interact among them. Thus, microhistory



describes processes in which individuals participate in social life, so the analysis of microhistorical accounts has the potential to capture both individual and social transformations.

Finally it is important to mention that there is a common assumption that to think about time is to think in linear terms. From the past to the present, and in terms of the different times, it is a prevalent idea an assumption of a particular directionality: general history impacts the history of individual societies, the history of an individual society impacts the history of an individual and the history of the individual impacts microhistory. As a result of this approach to history, development is seen also as the result of a wave originated in the past which unfolds into the present. I argue that this captures only part of the the complexity of human history.

As I pointed when I referred to general history and to ontogeny, microhistory does not only refer to a succession of events in human life, informed or determined by the conditions received from our pasts. The succession of events in microhistory is also driven by intentions and possible futures, and so, by the particular situation at stake as part of the activity as well as a result of the negotiations among participants in such an activity. I do not go any further at this point, as I discuss microhistory in Chapter 5.

### **Psychology in the classroom**

Up to this point, I have discussed issues related to the study of emotions in psychology and Vygotsky's philosophical reflection in order to study emotions in a way that their study does not imply a split between their individual and social aspects. Before moving to the empirical part of this study, there is an additional Vygotskian concept that I find helpful to analyse emotions in classrooms. This concept is the zone of proximal development or ZPD as it is widely known in sociocultural perspectives.

Schools intentionally offer cultural mediators to young generations. Within schools, teachers have an important role in students' learning through particular artefacts and tools, working under certain rules and responding to a peculiar division of labour at schools (these are the elements identified in Engeström's, 1987 activity systems). The practice in which teacher and students engage in a classroom has a particular intention: students' learning. In secondary schools, teachers negotiate with students their learning of what is systematised, organised and presented in the curriculum of a particular subject.

The ZPD involves the recognition of the role that other people play in the development of individuals. In terms of child development Cole states that;

even young infants incorporate cultural constraints as basic constituents of their developing selves because they are ‘inside adult scripts’ and adults embody their (ideal) cultural futures in the ideal/material current contexts of their everyday lives (Cole, 1996, p. 218).

The ZPD was originally defined by Vygotsky, with reference to the difference between independent performance and the performance achieved with the help of an adult (Vygotsky, 1991). However, issues related to emotions were not explicitly considered in his model. Later developments (Engestrom, 1987, for example) emphasize the value of motives as part of learning and so development, but not yet other emotions that could emerge in pedagogic practices. The ZPD has the potential of being the space in which, along with the learning of curricular content, the learning of how to work through emotions takes place. Emotions are not always functional to the purpose of the practice (in this case students’ learning). It seems reasonable to think that teachers offer students mediators for the regulation and working through emotions as part of their pedagogic practices. In the ZPD constitutes emotions are negotiated, thought and learned through the participation in practices and, in this case, in the pedagogic practices that take place in the classroom.

### **Why a sociocultural approach**

The fact that I use the term ‘sociocultural’ to describe the approach that I have developed in this work requires an explanation. As a summary of what I have discussed above, Vygotsky’s work has studied

the socio-cultural-historical constitution of human nature... (they work under the premise) that the species characteristic of human beings is their need and ability to inhabit an environment transformed by the activity of prior members of their species. Such transformations and the mechanism of the transfer of these transformations from one generation to the next are the result of the ability/proclivity of human beings to create and use artifacts – aspects of the material world that are taken up into human action as modes of coordinating with the physical and social environment (Cole, in Wertsch, Del Río & Alvarez, p. 190).

The acknowledgement that to study human beings cannot be done without taking into account what they have received from previous generations is at the basis of this approach. For this reason, human experience is constructed in a world mediated through artefacts received from the past, and with implicit futures.

Broadly speaking, however, this tradition has flowed into two main perspectives. On the one hand, what is known as sociocultural approaches, mostly developed in the Western

world (Cole, 1996), have paid particular attention to Vygotsky's emphasis on semiotic mediation, i.e. the particular role that signs as psychological tools (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992), offer in the relations among human beings. These approaches pay attention to the interdependence and co-construction of social and individual processes (John-Steiner and Mahn, 2011), and these approaches have led to the acknowledgement of the situated character of human development, and thus, the importance of context.

On the other hand, the emphasis on collective activity (Leontiev, ref.), has given place to Cultural Historical Activity Theory or *CHAT* (Engestrom, 1987; Cole, 1996). This approach emphasizes the social coordination built around an object which gives meaning and sense to individual actions in particular settings. The different aspects of culture that mediate the relations between the social subject (of which individuals are part) and the object of their activity are artefacts, rules and division of labour (Engestrom, 1987). In this view, the activity system and the relations between and among activity systems constitute the unit of analysis (Tuomi-Grohn and Engestrom, 2003).

In my case, my aim is not to differentiate theoretical strands, but to bring elements of both traditions together in order to undertake the enterprise of studying emotions. For this reason, I pay attention to concepts such as context, practice and history (microhistory), while at the same time discussing, for example, components of activity systems delineated by CHAT tradition (Engeström, 1987; Tuomi-Grohn and Engeström, 2003). Nevertheless, I neither emphasize activity systems as the central element of my attention, nor as a unit of analysis. All things considered, I decided to use the term 'sociocultural' mostly for practical reasons: non-specialists in these perspectives would easily identify this term as a reference to Vygotsky's legacy. Certainly, not many people read theses other than examiners, but students do, and I hope that my thesis can be useful for someone.

## **Wrapping up**

In this chapter, I turned my attention to the discipline of psychology. To this end, I have briefly presented both individualistic and social theories of emotions in psychology in order to show their limitations in addressing the individual and social aspects of emotions as a unity. I have argued that those limitations rely on old dualisms, identified

by Vygotsky eight decades ago. I then presented Vygotsky's approach to the study of psychological phenomena. Vygotsky sought to challenge dualism precisely via the construction of a 'unified psychology' and a historical approach to the study of psychological phenomena. I argue that the study of emotions from a sociocultural approach nowadays would also need to consider the unity in the study of psychological phenomena, including emotions, and a historical approach. The unity of the phenomena suggested by Vygotsky implies not only that consciousness, the unconscious and behaviour cannot be split from each other, but also that emotions cannot be separated from the rest of life. On the other hand, a historical approach would imply the understanding of the process of changes in studies of psychological phenomena, and in this case, emotions. A historical approach involves not only the study of the transformation of emotions in an unidirectional way, namely from the past to the future, and from evolution to human histories. A historical approach involves also the understanding of the weight of possible futures and the negotiationsa that take place in the present time as influencing the way in which emotions are experienced by the participants in a classroom.

In this way, I take elements of Vygotsky's work on the embeddedness of emotions as part of social life, and the need to study psychological phenomena historically. I found in his work, and in the work of other researchers who build on his work, some elements that help to characterise an all-embracing psychological approach within which emotions could be studied in an integrated way in which no fixed line separates what is individual and social in emotions. Such a line cannot be drawn because emotions are socially mediated, individually experienced and their social and individual aspects work together. This implies an understanding of the embodiment of emotions in social practices. In so doing, my investigation of what emotions *are* has changed to acknowledge the need to investigate what emotions *do* in social contexts and interaction. On that basis, I argue that the study of emotions in individuals would need to be reconsidered in psychological research in order to account for culture and history, as cutting these elements misses the point. On the other hand, the offering an account of the social aspects of emotions, needs to consider the participation and experience of individuals involved in the social context.

Although Vygotsky's approach does not offer a methodology or a detailed set of conceptual tools for studying emotions, he offers the foundation for their study. In the following two chapters, I develop a proposal for the study of emotions, which I call

sociocultural, based on his ideas. In Chapter 4, I discuss my methodological decisions and in Chapter 5, I discuss three concepts that I use as foci for the study of emotions in the classroom. Those foci are, as I had previously mentioned, context, social practice and microhistory.

## Chapter 4: The study of emotions in the classroom

Method means the path, we understand method as the means of cognition; but the path in all of its points is determined by the goal.  
(Lev Vygotsky, 1927, cited by Veresov, 1998)

### Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the empirical work and discuss the methodological decisions undertaken in my research. The study comprises the analysis of video recorded excerpts of secondary classrooms using what I call a *sociocultural approach*. The delineation of a pathway for the study of emotions is grounded in the analysis of concrete situations, in order to show its usefulness and potential for further study.

Two sources of data are used in order to construct *microsituations*: video recorded interactions in the classroom and field notes. The videos and notes were recorded during the observation of lessons of four Spanish teachers, working in a Mexican secondary school. Each of the teachers was working with one of their groups. Microsituations are video excerpts not shorter than half a minute and not longer than three minutes. The microsituations present classroom interactions in great detail. The field notes have a complementary role, offering information that supports interpretative descriptions and explanations that help to make sense of the situations presented in the videos.

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the importance of avoiding the creation of dichotomies in the study of emotions. When emotions are studied solely in their social aspect, avoiding the study of the biology of emotions, I have argued, a vacuum is created for the construction of another discipline that runs in parallel and deals with the issues that had been left out, i.e. the biology or physiology of emotions. I have also argued that a similar phenomenon takes place when emotions are studied only from the perspective of their physiology, leaving aside the study of the ways in which emotions are not only interpreted, but also transformed as part of the participation in the social context. I have also argued that in order to avoid dichotomies it is necessary that the unity in the analysis of individual and social aspects of emotions is fundamental. Such a unity does not simply imply to identify both aspects, but to understand the social dynamic in which individual participation, and thus experience, occurs. As part of this dynamic, there is the implicit allusion to the fact that biology lives in a social world and it is unviable out of that social sphere. This research, however, does not address the physiology of emotions at any point; rather, it involves the study of classroom situations and shows the way in which emotions emerge and change in that context. The broader

contexts offered, however, allow further discussion of what a sociocultural study of emotions entails (a discussion which takes place in Chapter 10).

In this chapter, I describe how the empirical work was undertaken and the rationale for the decisions made. With this aim, I organise the information in two parts. In the first one, entitled research design and following a discussion about the nature of the research question, I describe the practicalities of the research process including the way in which data were gathered, analysed and presented. In the second part, foundations of the empirical work, I discuss the main aspects involved in the decisions made, which include considerations about how emotions have been researched, the use of video in research, epistemological considerations, ethical issues involved and some possibilities and limits of this study.

## **Research design**

In this section, I delineate the overall structure of the empirical research and the main aspects of the research process in order to address the question posed. Thus, after a discussion about the nature of the question, I describe the processes of data gathering, data analysis and the presentation of data.

### ***The nature of the question***

The present study aims to address the question: *How does a sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* The challenge is set by the need to rethink current issues that are relevant to the understanding of teaching and learning in classrooms. In Chapter 1, I emphasized the importance of understanding a number of issues in which emotions have a central role, such as the link between experience and cultural diversity, the processes by which human beings learn to participate, a process in which working through emotions is part and parcel, and the ways in which individual and collective learning happens in classrooms, which also involves working through emotions. In this context, it makes sense that an understanding of what happens with emotions in the classroom is needed, and I argue that to satisfy this need a sociocultural approach is required.

The nature of the question posed presumes the need for a qualitative, interpretative, approach, which gives an in-depth perspective of the way in which emotions play in the classroom, both simultaneously in the individual and the social plane. The question is not only descriptive: it does not simply offer a detailed interpretive recount (what, who, when, where); nor does it only offer an explanation of why or how emotions take place

as they do in classrooms. Rather, the question is interpretive in terms of pondering the usefulness of a theoretical approach, which I call sociocultural, to understand emotions in the classroom. Therefore, the qualitative approach is grounded in the use of a theory to think about the data gathered and built from a particular stance. In brief, the nature of the question brings together the need for a detail interpretive recount and an explanation of the way in which emotions emerge and change in the classroom, together with the consideration of the use of a particular theoretical approach to undertake this task.

I consider that it would be too much to say that there are stages in the process described in the previous chapter. The process of pondering the usefulness of a theory can only happen in the use of such a theory. Particularly, as I will discuss below, my main criticism of the sociocultural or cultural historical approaches, and in general approaches to the study of emotions which consider their social aspects, is that they do not rethink what refer to the biology of emotions. Therefore, there is a tendency to see emotions only as considering the impact from the social situation in the individual. With this, the surprising character of emotions, such as when we get upset in spite of not wanting to have that feeling, or when our laughter or tears overcome our best efforts to stifle them, because it is not socially appropriate, is lost. It is then common that we lose the body and the uncontrollable character of our human experiences, when we think socially, and that we leave the space for a purely physiological theory to come and tell us what emotions *really are*. Being loyal to Vygotsky's views, we need to level the terrain before building the road, to use an engineering metaphor. Otherwise, we cannot distinguish a socioconstructionist approach from one built on Vygotsky's work; in addition, we may lose Vygotsky's realism (Edwards, 2007), and miss the opportunity to extract the full consequences of his embracing contribution to psychology.

In the past, qualitative approaches were usually considered appropriate to study phenomena in depth in order to later engage in quantitative research (Goldthorpe, 2000, 65-93). However, qualitative research does not need to be positioned in a hierarchy of research methodologies, because hermeneutical approaches can be as varied as exploratory, explanatory or descriptive (Yin, 2009). This research aims to use, and thus, to ponder the usefulness of a sociocultural perspective to approach the analysis of emotions in the classroom. Therefore, the empirical work, in the last instance, aims to address the issue of the contribution of a sociocultural theory to the understanding of emotions in the classroom. This is the context where an interpretive approach to the data makes sense, but such an interpretation does not emerge only from the data, but it also



emerges from the framework suggested in the previous chapter, which is used as a tool to approach the data.

### ***The data gathered***

In this section, I present a description of the way in which I gained access to the school, the activities that I undertook within that context and so, the kind of data gathered during the fieldwork.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, my interest and methodological focus in relation to emotions emerged when I was at the stage of analysing data. Originally, my interest was in ICT in education. I was working on the project SEC21 (21st Century Secondary School), coordinating the use of ICT in Spanish (as a mother tongue). Secondary schools in Mexico offer three years of education for students aged between 12 and 15 years old<sup>1</sup>.

My fieldwork period took place between May 2003 and May 2004. In May 2003 (school year 2002-2003), I ran a workshop to which I invited all the Spanish teachers of the schools participating in the project in Mexico City. During the workshop, I asked who wanted to participate in a research project. My aim was to choose a school that was in the middle of the league tables (not among the best or worst ones in terms of results according to the Ministry of Education)<sup>2</sup>. Teachers of two schools that had this level of performance came forward, and I chose the school that was geographically more accessible for me. The school in which I undertook the fieldwork was then an urban school that works in the afternoon shift. The school was composed of 15 groups, 5 per year. The number of students per year were: between 30 to 35 students in first year; around 25 in second year, and less than 20 in third year.

I undertook semi-structured interviews with the head-teacher and the Spanish teachers by June 2003 and came back in August 2003 at the beginning of the school year. From August to December 2003, I attended the school every day, a period in which I observed and video recorded lessons and engaged in numerous informal conversations with the Spanish teachers and other members of staff. I also helped to organise the use of the multimedia room and offered workshops to the Spanish teachers to encourage the use of ICT and videos in their teaching of curricular content. From January to May 2004, I had

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<sup>1</sup> Students study 1<sup>st</sup> year from 12 to 13; 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 13 to 14; and 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 14 to 15, although this may vary because, because some students might be above the age they are supposed to be due to years being repeated

<sup>2</sup> All the schools in the project were amongst the top fifty per cent as compared with all the secondary schools in the country.

additional informal interviews, and one last formal semi-structured interview with each of the 4 teachers between April and May 2004. During my fieldwork, I was interested in investigating the ways in which teachers gradually integrated the use of ICT and video to their everyday teaching. This was in principle the focus of the workshops I offered, the observations and video recording of lessons, and the interviews and informal conversations.

I worked with three female teachers and one male teacher, all of whom had more than ten years of experience as teachers. I observed each teacher with one of their groups only. The table below summarises the information about the four teachers, and in the last column the group with which I observed each of them.

Name <sup>3</sup>	Age	Studies	Kind of contract	Number of groups per year	Hours		Other jobs	Observed with
					Total	Prep hrs.		
Luisa	Mid-50s	Primary and secondary teacher	Permanent	3 x 2 <sup>nd</sup>	17	2	4 groups in another secondary school and adult education	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Pilar	Mid-40s	Bachelor Degree in Spanish Literature	Temporary	1 x 1 <sup>st</sup> 1 x 3 <sup>rd</sup>	14	4	Voluntary work in church	1 <sup>st</sup>
Ricardo	Mid-30s	Secondary teacher, Studying another BA in Education	Permanent	4 x 1 <sup>st</sup>	20	0	Another secondary school	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sofía <sup>4</sup>	Early 40s	Primary and secondary teacher	Permanent	4 x 3 <sup>rd</sup>	20	0	A primary school	3 <sup>rd</sup>
		<b>Totals</b>	75% permanent staff among the Spanish teachers that participated		5 x 1 <sup>st</sup> 3 x 2 <sup>nd</sup> 5 x 3 <sup>rd</sup>			

**Figure 1. Table: The four teachers**

The total number of groups in the school was 15. The two 2<sup>nd</sup> year groups not included in the Figure 1 did not have a teacher and they were covered irregularly by the deputy head-teacher. In the last month of observations a new teacher arrived, Lidia, but she did not participate in the project.

During the fieldwork, a BA student helped me in different ways, including sometimes the handling of the camera. This might be unusual for a PhD study, but this is what happened. Seen in perspective, I should have not done it, particularly when the videos became the basic material for my analysis. Nevertheless, this is what happened on some occasions, while I took notes. The student was not available all the time, because she had other responsibilities in the school. For this task, I instructed her with the central

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms were given to all the participants to ensure anonymity.

<sup>4</sup> She was the Spanish subject coordinator

point being to follow the teacher and the interactions that the teacher had with the students. Also, I was taking notes, but I was in visual contact with the student indicating with my eyes where to go, particularly when the teacher was moving around to speak with a student at the back of the classroom, for example. After a short period, the student learned to do it, at a reasonable level, judging from my viewings of the videos after she took them. However, this student later became bored and in the last months of my fieldwork she always had a pretext for not coming to video record the sessions. Therefore, I handled the camera, and in fact, the four excerpts that I chose to present in the chapters to follow were recorded by me.

I do not offer additional information about the details of the whole process that took place in the school. What is important to stress is the ensemble of the data gathered during my time there: 45 videos of observations of Spanish lessons taken when a teacher was interacting with the students both in the Spanish and in the media (computer) classrooms, 25 sets of interview notes, from both formal and informal interviews, 77 audio recordings of the lessons observed (as a backup in most of the also video recorded sessions), the interviews (not all of them recorded) and some miscellaneous data (such as the workshops offered and other conversations with diverse members of the staff), workshops plans (the workshops about ICT I offered) and the feedback given by the teachers, field notes taken throughout the process (including notes taken after my meetings with the head teacher) and printed information offered by the headteacher such as lists of students, list of staff, timetables, leaflets, regulations, and reports about the use of ICT in the school. Looking back, the amount of data gathered was excessive, and although redundant would not be the appropriate word to think critically about the fact that I often had video and audio, the multiplication of data was unnecessary.

The length of the videos was between 5 minutes and 51 minutes. Although the lessons were 50 minutes long, the videos rarely covered the whole lesson for diverse reasons, such as a late start, a short conversation between the teacher and the deputy headteacher, an exam or a short individual task at the end of the lesson where no interaction took place (so the video recorder was stopped).

All in all, this is what happened before the focus of my research turned to emotions in the classroom, when my intentions were quite different.

### ***Data selection and analysis***

The change of focus in my research happened when I was analysing the data I had gathered. I will neither discuss in detail the difficulties I was facing in that analysis, nor what I lived at a personal level that led to the change of interests. I have briefly explained already that emotions started being shockingly important through my repeated watching of the videos. Eventually, I became aware that the climate created by each teacher and their students in the different classrooms was very different among them. I found it interesting that the use of the technologies available seemed to be related to that climate. For example, I could identify situations in which certain software was used to control students' behaviour or other situations in which the teacher was asking some students for help to support their classmates in the use of technology. Such examples had been reported in the literature or in recounts written by teachers, which I had read before. The novelty for me was the importance of emotions in the generation of a particular kind of climate in the classroom. I realised that this had a potential to be researched. However, I needed to review the appropriate literature, pose a new question, and choose what data to use, considering that affective dimensions have been often acknowledged (but not investigated) in classroom research since Jackson's (1968) classic study. Soon, I realised that I needed to leave aside my interest in ICT and move on to another field. I presented the question that I wanted to address above, as well as the literature reviewed. In this section, I discuss what data I decided to use if I did not want to sail adrift or even sink in the odyssey that this PhD became for me. In the lines below, I describe how I came back to be in charge, as the helmswoman of my own research.

Before addressing the description of my decisions in relation to data selection and analysis, I need to discuss how I came to my question. I felt discontent with both the sociological and the psychological literature about emotions and I knew from previous studies of Vygotsky, that his perspective aims to find a dialectic synthesis of approaches, for example in relation to the formation of concepts and issues of word meaning (Vygotsky's 1987). That is how I came to study Vygotsky's *Collected Works* in search of a clarity that was not evident for me neither in the aforementioned literature, nor in the literature about emotions produced in the bosom of the Vygotskian traditions. This in turn led to the question about how such an approach can make a contribution to the understanding of emotions in the classroom.

Returning to my data, I realised that if most of the participation in a classroom goes beyond words, regarding emotions, this is even clearer. To my surprise, I did not find literature that analysed emotions in the classroom as the object of study. Emotions take place in the context of the participation in the particular culture of a classroom. This participation involves language, and behaviour, i.e. literally the movement of the body in the social space of the classroom. This made it clear for me that my most valuable resource to address the research question presented above was the video recorded material. In addition, the field notes constituted a reference that could indicate the situation in which the video took place.

I watched the videos numerous times. I checked my field notes and I took new notes while I watched them; in some cases, I prepared timelines of classroom interaction sequences in order to understand the sequence and links among events; later, I learned Atlas TI, the software, in an attempt to be able to code directly to the videos. Finally, after these efforts I made two decisions. First, I realised that I needed to transcribe in a way in which text and images of what was going on in classroom interactions worked together. Second, I decided that the field notes offered useful information to make sense of the situation.

The criteria for selected segments or excerpts that I call microsituations in the videos were defined by the interaction that took place. I considered that a beginning and an end could be identified in order to set a microsituation. For example, an interaction in which the teacher explains how the plan for the work in pairs will take place during the lessons, a couple of students ask for clarifications about the organisation of the work and the work starts. I found between 2 and 9 segments per video, all of them over 30 seconds and under three minutes in length. In my first inventory of segments, which later became microsituations, it was hard for me to identify emotions<sup>5</sup> very clearly. Although one of my intentions was to only record interactions between teacher and students, in a lesson there are moments in which this does not happen, and that is why it was not always possible to identify a sequence of microsituations that followed one another. For example, while the students work in groups, the teacher sets a video on the computer, and therefore there is no interaction in which the teacher is involved (one of the conditions that I set for the recording). On other occasions, students had to work individually or in groups, while the teacher was calling them individually to check

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<sup>5</sup> My definition of emotions is the affect involved in human participation in social practices and thus, simultaneously, in relation to the transformation of the world and in relation to the interactions with others

work, or the teacher had a quick chat with me and not with the students. Although I did not stop the video camera, those moments could not be identified as microsituations in the sense that I use.

From that large number of identified microsituations, I chose only between three and five segments per teacher (16 in total), in order to analyse them in greater detail. The segments were chosen in terms of variety of situations: teaching grammatical content in the Spanish classroom, using an audio recording in the media classroom as a source for creative writing, scolding the students for arriving late, etc. I did not want to associate a teacher with laughter and joy and another teacher with annoyance. The process of viewing the videos, checking the field notes and taking notes was slow and repeated to the level that I knew those segments almost by heart. One of the strategies that I used was to stop the video, to play it slowly, sometimes frame by frame in order to capture the movements in detail. On other occasions, I played the video without audio, or the audio without video, to concentrate on one or the other in greater detail. The notes that I took during the observation of the videos included the transcription of the dialogues and comments about the situation. Soon I noticed that I was describing, but my descriptions were not enough to depict the situation presented. I realised at that point that in order to make sense of the emotions, the microsituation needed to be presented in full, or the overall sense of the situation was difficult to capture.

Sometimes emotions were more easily identified as they were mentioned by the participants. For example: “I feel upset with your behaviour”. However, I gradually learned to identify different emotions emerging, having an impact and being transformed during the microsituations, to the level in which I could identify several of them in a microsituation, as the data presented in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 show. Finally, I concluded that I needed drawings in order to present the microsituations. I converted the videos into photos, and the photos into drawings. Afterwards, I had to complete the drawings to make them clearer with line drawing and shading. Also, I needed to use arrows and marks to stress certain aspects and to indicate the direction of the movements. Additionally, I overlapped sequences of images to represent movement. I only prepared detailed drawings for the four excerpts included in the aforementioned chapters, as the process was laborious (there are about 200 drawings in these chapters).

Before thinking about the presentation of the data, I realised that I needed to define certain foci that helped me set in place my analytical priorities and engage in a clear

discussion of a sociocultural approach with the data. I discuss the foci for the data analysis in the following chapter.

### ***Presentation of data***

To summarise, the number of elements included in the kind of transcriptions that I present in this research comprise: (1) transcription of talk, (2) descriptions and explanations about the situation, (3) vignettes that depict the scene (including overlapping images to offer the impression of movement), sometimes focusing on the main actors participating in the situation, and (4) arrows, circles and other indicators to give detailed information about direction and repetition of movement or to stress the main issues under analysis.

For the transcription, I use common conventions for overlapping talk, and information in parentheses to offer details about movement, intonation and volume. For the descriptions, I include information from my notes and the many unstructured interviews held with the teachers and other people in the school, as well as comments and inferences that I obtained from my knowledge of the situation (informed by either my experience as a former teacher or my knowledge of Mexican culture). The vignettes zoom in and out, and I use elements to emphasize the most important aspect under discussion, such as arrows to indicate movement or a circle to emphasize the position of a hand or a smile, for example.

The descriptions and the ensemble of the transcriptions are interpretive at least in two senses: it is my view as an observer who decided what was important in the situation analysed. First, there is an interpretive approach involved in the point of view of the camera, and second, in the actors to whom I give a close up in the vignettes and descriptions, and the issues emphasized. I interpret as an insider/outsider, having been a secondary Spanish teacher, being Mexican, and simultaneously not being the teacher in the situations analysed.

The four microsituations that I include in the data analysis and the discussion sections were selected in relation to variety among them. I chose the first one because it shows the link between curricular content (the literary content in Don Quixote) together with a local Mexican comic. I also thought that it was important to present a situation in which students were laughing and enjoying themselves. Once I had chosen the first of microsituation, a second one was chosen by contrast (where annoyance, fear and anger are present) and then the third one (about a student challenging his teacher) and the

fourth one (where a teacher supports a student working through his embarrassment) in relation to those previously chosen. The variety presented was not only in relation to the emotions that emerged in those microsituations, but also in relation to the way in which the relations between students and teacher developed and the theme that was at stake. Variety was for me an important element in this selection. Once I had selected the microsituations to present, I decided the order, according to the issues that I identified in the literature, i.e. the foci.

## **Foundations of the empirical work**

In the second part of this chapter I discuss five aspects in relation to the decisions made in the empirical work: methodologies for the study of emotions, the use of video in research, epistemological considerations, ethical issues involved in this research, and limitations and possibilities of this study.

### ***Researching emotions***

In this section, I present a brief overview of the methods in research about emotions. Often, studies of emotions have focused on the experience of emotions, i.e. they have relied on interviews, but other studies rely on body expressions and physiological changes. I argue that the observation of emotions as part of practices offers a useful approach for the question that guides this research. In this section, I show the achievements and limitations of other approaches in methodological terms and I engage in reflecting about the possibility of using those methodologies to answer the question posed.

A common method to study emotions in cognitive psychology has been the analysis of facial expressions (Ekman and Oster, 1979; Ekman and Rosenberg, 2005; Tsai *et al.*, 2002) or the unconscious reactions of others to those expressions (Dimberg, Thunberg and Elmhed, 2000). However, Mesquita and colleagues (Mesquita and Ellsworth, 2001; Mesquita and Walker, 2003) discard the sole observation of emotional situations as a viable research design for the study of emotions, because they sustain that interviews are necessary in order to find the interrelations and interdependence between the emotional appraisals reported through interviews and the situations observed.

Hargreaves (2000; 2001a; 2002a; 2002b; 2005b), possibly the most well known researcher in the field of teachers' emotions, studies them by relying on interviews as the sole source of data, which enable teachers to discursively walk through their experienced emotions in dialogue with the researcher. Hargreaves (2000; 2001a) uses



this discourse for both linking emotional episodes and teachers' lives and delineating a 'geographical' landscape of the 'patterns of closeness and/or distance' experienced by the teachers in their interaction with the world and with others within the school context. The most important achievements of Hargreaves's study were the number of teachers interviewed, the range of topics covered in relation to their emotions and the level of detail in the interviews undertaken in which teachers report their experiences. Nevertheless, the limitation of interviews is that not everything can be reported. First, because the interview involves reflection about the experience after it has occurred. This could also be analysed, but that gives a particular stance in the attempt to answer the question I posed, which involves participation in social practices and thus, interaction. Additionally, as Vygotsky (1999) has pointed out, not everything about emotions takes place in the realm of consciousness. Many aspects of emotions are unconscious, in the sense that they come to our awareness only partially or not at all.

For the reasons stated above, as Sutton and Wheatley (2003) insist in their comprehensive methodological review of the research about teachers' emotions at the time, Hargreaves's (1998a; 1998b; 2000; Hargreaves and Tucker, 1991) approach leaves aside first the emotions within everyday practices, which according to him should be studied through emotional expressions, and second, emotions and psychological changes (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003).

Additionally, as I discuss in the literature reviewed in Chapter 3, physiological measures (either at the visceral level or at the level of the central nervous system) have been shown to be insufficient long ago (Canon, 1927) as the sense of the emotions is built through experience, which, I argue, are socially constructed. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) sustain that it is necessary to use a combination of research techniques, including physiological measures', apart from interviews in order to go 'beyond self-report'. They support the need for this approach in other fields where combinations of research techniques have been used for studying emotions (Gross *et al.*, 1997; Tsai *et al.*, 2002), finding evidence of cultural differences (Tsai and Levenson, 1997; Tsai, Levenson and McCoy, 2006; Wong and Tsai, 2007). With the idea of studying emotions when they are 'felt', some researchers have also used diaries (Oatley and Duncan, 1994) or the recording of emotions at particular intervals (Fisher, 2000).

In my study, I argue that the context in which emotions are studied needs to be acknowledged, in order not to split their individual and social aspects. In experiments, for example, the role of the way in which an experiment is framed, including artefacts

and settings, and the relationship between the researcher and the person that participates in the research is often taken for granted. In relation to the research question I posed, the context of study cannot be obliterated.

In cultural psychology (sociocultural or CHAT studies), following Vygotsky, there has been a tendency to resort to ethnopsychology, (Cole, 1996; Blunden, 2008), in relation to the study of cognition. Cole (1996) has stressed the need to inform the development of experiments with ethnographic work which builds upon *real* cultural situations. This could also apply to the building of experiments in the study of emotions. Nevertheless, my interest is not easily fulfilled via experiments.

From a cultural historical perspective, evidence has been gathered to support emotional engagement in the workplace. For example, Roth (2007a; 2004; 2006) has analysed vocal pitch variation, in his ethnographic study in a salmon hatchery. In his studies he has shown evidence that workers' knowledge in relation to work related issues entails emotions. His approach to the study of emotions, however, presents two difficulties: the first is that although this could be studied within interaction and even through participation in social practices, the variation of pitch can possibly be affected by individual variation in speaking practices, interactional reasons, i.e. in the way in which talk and other actions impact the pitch and therefore its measurement, and culture. In this way, an analysis of these particularities in pitch in a specific context should be accounted for.

Additionally, while Roth's (2007a; 2004; 2006) work aims to make evident that emotions are present, my research takes the presence of emotions as a basic assumption. My aim is to explore the ways in which they are interactionally worked through, and embedded within particular teaching contexts. This last point, the need to study emotions interactionally and in their embeddedness within teaching practices, is in fact shared by the perspectives delineated so far: emotions are assumed to be basically individual, subjective and physiological, and the way in which they are socially built is considered a secondary aspect that emerges at a separate level. Studied in this way, Roth still leaves a space open for the existence of a legitimate biological science that studies emotions independently from culture.

In sociolinguistics, Goodwin and Goodwin have investigated emotions situated in practice. Their methodology, ethnographically informed, consists of a close observation of emotions in action through video recordings of girls at play (Goodwin, 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin, 2000; Goodwin, Goodwin and Yaeger-Dror, 2002). Their

studies have shown how emotions emerge and develop within interaction and as part of the ongoing task, and they do so using drawings and descriptions of interaction, making their analysis very rich, as well as inspiring in relation to my work. Although the focus of their research has not been to study emotions, but to demonstrate that situated actions are emotionally loaded, this is a positive example that shows how valuable video is as a method for studying emotions. In my work I aim to develop this kind of approach further, not so much to demonstrate the emotionality implied in actions, but to study the way in which emotions emerge, change over time, and simultaneously transform the context.

I assume a situated character to emotions as part of the context in which they emerge and by which they are shaped. Therefore, I argue, emotions cannot be reduced to properties or experiences of individuals *per se*. In this sense, individual experience would be as important as the social context in which emotions are experienced if emotions are defined in relation to the passions involved in participation in social practices as I defined in Chapter 1.

To sum up, I aim to focus in the interactional, verbal, or non verbal, ‘working through’ of emotions and emotionality, in order to see if a sociocultural approach broadly delineated in Chapter 3 proves its usefulness in the understanding of emotions in the classroom and so, its potential for researching emotions in an integrated manner. Thus, emotions in this study are linked to communication, but communication is subsumed to a particular context, the classroom. Contexts are imbued by purposes and particular situated engagements, which permeate the emergence and transformation of emotions. Although the methods reported above have offered insights into, and may continue producing findings of interest about emotions, the definition of an adequate methodology needs to respond to the question posed together with the theoretical perspective that is constructed and the way in which the object of study is built. To address the issue of emotions in a way that is consistent with the perspective of a sociocultural non-dualistic psychology which addresses the question posed, emotions need to be studied with a qualitative approach, and in this case, analysis of video recorded micro situations and field notes seem a reasonable way to do it for the reasons stated.

Specific resources to structure the analysis of video data are needed in order to offer grounding to the broad sociocultural perspective delineated in the previous chapter. While working with my data, I realised that concepts or foci that supported and

sharpened the analysis of emotions from a sociocultural approach (which could breach the dichotomy, if the oxymoron works) were needed. I present those foci in Chapter 5.

### ***The use of video in research***

My research comprises four video-recorded microsituations. In this section, I discuss some of the features of video-based research and some of the issues involved in the decisions made, considering that “the methods of data collection that we choose determine the kinds of data that we have access to, and thus shape analyses” (Price and Jewitt, 2013, p. 87).

In the last decade the analysis of videos has flourished (Bezemer, 2012; Jewitt, 2005; Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2001; Kress, 2006; Somekh, Mavers and Lewin, 2002). The advantages of using video over note taking during observation have been stressed, as video can capture facial expressions and gestures, body movements and actions, and mostly because with video it is possible to have access to the recording numerous times, at different speeds, with or without sound (Mavers, 2012), and to zoom into particular details of the video during the data analysis. Furthermore, the dissemination of results can include pieces of video, drawings or diagrams extracted from the recorded materials, which could be printed or even hyperlinked.

Using videos implies a number of decisions, some of them taken in advance of the empirical work and others taken on the spot. Such decisions include the number of cameras, the beginning and end of the recording, what to shoot, from where and how far from/close to the participants (Mavers, 2012, p. 2). These decisions are important because the view of the camera is partial, an aspect that makes literal a limitation that any research has; also, the camera materialises in an artefact the fact that observation is, or at least might be, intrusive and can have an impact on the situation studied, including both social interactions and participations in a practice. I will come back to this issue in the final section of this chapter.

Transcription also involves decision making about both what to include and what to leave out for each transcript (Mavers, 2012), nevertheless the guide for selection of the episodes and the approach to transcription is still the research question (Bezemer, 2012). However, as my research question is also imbued with a theoretical approach (sociocultural), the transcription needs to also respond to it. Thus, transcribing has a purpose and a focus, and video transcriptions are complex tasks which are in themselves an analytical exercise (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011),

Transcribing video involves attention to detail in order to record actions and interactions in such a way that transcriptions are loyal to the video. Nevertheless, while there are “well-established conventions for transcribing speech... there is not such standardisation in multimodal transcription... (and) contemporary researchers continue to experiment with transcribing video data” (Mavers, 2012, p. 2, parenthesis added), I take this point as an advantage in terms of the openness to define what is useful in this particular research. Transcriptions that include drawings do not represent the events and actions undertaken, they constitute vignettes, abstractions from the situation or even ‘friendly analytic caricatures’ (Erickson, 1977). Transcriptions have an interpretive character. Mavericks (2011) states that the process of transcribing has received different names, one of which is multimodal transcription, in order to stress the multiple modes involved in it. Nevertheless, the allusion to modes explicitly stresses only or mostly the communicative aspects of the modes. which include paralinguistic elements, following Kress and colleagues (Jewitt, Kress et al., 2009; Kress, 1998, 2002, 2009; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2002), as Mavericks states that multimodal transcription implied “to go ‘beyond speech’ to find elements that are worthy to the analysis and interpretation in relation to the question” (Mavers, 2012, p. 5). I do not adhere to this approach, because I consider that it does not pay explicit attention to the intentions of participants and the implicit intentions that populate the material world in which communication takes place. I further discuss this issue when I present social practice (or practice) in Chapter 5.

In the literature about multimodality, however, there is a stress on issues of body language, such as gestures and gaze (Mavers, 2011, 2012; Bezemer and Mavericks, 2011, Bezemer, 2012). Because the focus of this research is the analysis of the affect involved in participation, communication is embedded in that participation. This makes it reasonable to enrich the transcripts with explicit interpretations and explanations. A sociocultural approach such as the one I have broadly delineated in the previous chapter involves widening the view on movement and its implications in the broader context of the social practice, and thus to the production and reproduction of the world and the social relations embedded in such a world.

### ***Epistemological considerations***

In this section, I discuss two epistemological issues: unit of analysis and a view that follows Vygotsky’s realist approach. The idea of a unified psychology poses a methodological challenge: if emotions cannot be reduced to their physiology only, if

they cannot be reduced to the experience of emotions, and if the experience of emotions cannot be captured in the individual intrapsychological processes, what would the unit of analysis be for the study of emotions.

Although Vygotsky uses the concept of unit of analysis (Vygotsky, 1997) to avoid reductionisms in psychology, its broad use in perspectives originating in his work (among many others Engestrom, 1987, Wertsch, 1994) could be causing polysemy (Matusov, 1997). As an illustration, the concept has been used to refer to word meaning as the unity between thinking and speech (Vygotsky, 1997), action as the unity between individual and social (as Wertsch, 1994 analyses) or activity system which involves a number of opposites that come together, such as individual-social, internalisation-externalisation and mediated action in the relation subject-object (Engestrom, 1999).

Wertsch (1994) emphasizes that in order to avoid antinomies between individual and society, it is necessary that the unit of analysis solves dialectically the antinomy suggested. The consequence of the unity is to show that the “the members of the antinomy can be viewed as dialectically interacting moments rather than objects or essences that ‘actually exist’” (Wertsch, 1994, p. 71). This view illustrates that the concept of ‘unit of analysis’ actually entails both an epistemological perspective and an ontological stance. I will come back to these issues after discussing further this concept (unit of analysis).

Edwards offers an overview of the meaning of unit of analysis when she declares that “adaptations of organism and environment meant that units of analysis needed to contain the dynamics under examination” (Edwards, 2007, p. 96). The concept is also linked to *germ-cell* which refers to a concrete whole (Blunden, 2014) avoiding the separation into parts or elements abstracted from their wholeness. This is the problem of a dichotomy, as discussed in the previous two chapters. Both concepts, unit of analysis and germ-cell, refer to the ensemble of the basic elements by which it is possible to reconstruct the whole (Blunden, 2014). Leaving unstudied segments, as I have discussed above, creates a space to multiply a phenomenon and to create diverse disciplines to approach the same problem. This is to say, for example, that if only the individuals’ experience of emotions is studied, without connection to the social context in which individuals live and construct their experiences, a sociology, that focus only in the social aspects of emotions, would study that aspect. There would be two objects of study that would find difficulties to engage in the understanding of the phenomenon in its wholeness. This is the reason for which issues related to the unit of analysis constitute

methodological consequence of the suggested notion of ‘unified psychology’ (Vygotsky, 1997).

A definition of the unit of analysis, as it needs to be adapted to analyse the object of enquiry, is linked both to the question posed, to what is conceptualized and to what is researched (Säljö, 2009). The definition of the need to study emotions in a situated manner implied the definition of the unit of analysis as a *microsituation*. By ‘microsituation’, I understand an event presented through time, which can be counted in minutes, and which takes place at the level of interactions and participation in a task which is part of a social practice. For example: a segment of a teaching and learning activity in the classroom, or the interaction that emerges between two passengers in a train station after one of them hits the other presumably unintentionally. A microsituation (and so the unit of analysis in this research) is short in length, but it is complete, as it depends on a clear beginning and a clear end.

Microsituation as a unit of analysis is important in relation to the length and level of detail of the transcriptions presented in this research. Their characteristics are defined by the intention of their use but also by the particular situation they depict (that is why they vary in length). They comprise a whole meaningful sequence of events. The length of the four excerpts that are presented is variable and defined by a sense of completion of the particular situation. The four microsituations refer to a number of situations and emotions: (1) the way in which a question about Don Quixote was solved in a classroom; (2) the framing of a task in the media classroom, in which a student moved the screen from the place where it was supposed to be; (3) the argument between a student, who challenges his teacher, and the teacher; and (4) the support that a teacher offers to a student when he reads his own text in front of the class. The completeness of situation allows an understanding of the way in which emotions emerge as part of the situation, as it is not fully dependent on my perspective, but on my actions on the data, and the criteria that I define in relation to the data.

In this research, it is important to underline the considerable contrast between the level of detail of the data analysed and the ‘level’ of the conclusions obtained. In Joyner’s words, I ask “large questions in small places” (2005, p. xiv). This is because, in spite of the fact that the empirical study entails a detailed analysis of data gathered in classroom interactions and participations in a few minutes extracted from lessons, this task is undertaken to obtain conclusions at a more general level than the data. Indeed, addressing the question posed implies to produce an inference about the usefulness of

what I call a sociocultural perspective to the study of emotions in the classroom. This is to say that the fact that a number of microsituations were defined as a relatively small amount of data does not reduce the scope of the conclusions. For this reason, we have on the one hand the descriptive analysis and then the use of such an analysis to address the issue of the usefulness of a particular approach, namely sociocultural, to study emotions in the classroom, as well as some implications for teacher practice and for further study.

This leads directly to the second epistemological issue about my study, which is its characterisation as interpretative, i.e. where data are interpreted according to my experience as a Mexican, as a teacher and as a teacher educator, it is necessary to address the question of what a sociocultural approach entails in the second part of this segment.

Vygotsky's suggestion for the study of emotions involves unity in the approach to psychological phenomena: neither only social, nor only individual; neither only biological, nor only interpretive; neither only in the body, nor only in the mind. A complex realism is at the basis of his scientific endeavours with a socio-historic approach (Edwards, 2007). Within the perspectives presented in the sociological recount in Chapters 2 and 3, and the methodologies discussed above, there is the implicit notion of multiple perspectives, none of which could claim to have a better understanding of the world that is independent of our knowledge.

Bhaskar's (2008), from a philosophical critical realist perspective, states that a 'holy trinity' is at the basis of such an approach. I find useful his ideas in order to define the three main characteristics of Vygotsky's realism: epistemic relativism, ontological realism and judgemental rationalism. The first element of this triad, epistemic relativism entails the impossibility of studying any phenomena without a subjective action and a perspective which is socially constructed. In this sense, it is impossible to study emotions *as they are*. However, the second element of the triad points to the fact that in spite of the perspective implied in any epistemological approach, there is also an acknowledgement of an ontological realism: reality is not reducible to our understanding, but it has an existence that goes further beyond that understanding. This implies that knowledge does not exhaust reality (or in Bhaskar's words, that ontology cannot be reduced to epistemology).

This latter point has as a consequence the third element of the triad, judgemental rationalism. If reality exceeds our knowledge of it, then we can critically engage in



discussions with other perspectives in order to critically analyse its accomplishments and shortcomings. This is what Vygotsky does, for example in *The Teaching about Emotions* (Vygotsky, 1999) but also in most of his writing in *The Collected Works*, such as *Thinking and Speech* (1987) and *The Crisis in Psychology* (1987). A critical realist approach leads to the possibility of a unified discipline, not as a result of an eclectic approach, but as a result of an embracing basis that sets the grounds for the construction of the study of emotions. In this case, it is able to level the terrain for a wider understanding of emotions. In the current landscape, cognitive psychologists only discuss their field among themselves, or interpretive psychologists (Gestalt, for example) engage in dialogue with other researchers in their perspective. In the case of sociocultural theorists, they currently engage in dialogue with CHAT researchers, but there is a dismissal of the research produced in other approaches. This is reasonable, after showing the shortcomings of those views, but research rarely works on the idea of a dialogue in which we all can participate. It seems that in general researchers do not listen/read to perspectives outside their own, and they talk at cross purposes. This is a fundamental reason to consider the relevance of Vygotsky nowadays.

### ***Ethical issues***

Ethical issues have to do with commitments and values (Burgess, 1989), which in turn delineate principles that lead research practice. Hammersley and Traianou (2007) define a number of principles which are relevant to my research in relation to the participants: autonomy, privacy, reciprocity and equity. In this section, I discuss them.

The first principle is autonomy, which is the right of participants to make decisions by themselves. The participants gave informed consent and they were informed of the possibility to opt out if they so decided. Although in Mexico, the consent given by teachers is enough to allow students to be part of a research project, parents, students and all the school staff were informed about the aim of the project. It was expressed in terms of the analysis of teaching and learning practices in school. In the case of Spanish, mostly: in the Spanish classrooms, the media classrooms and the library.

The second principle, privacy, has to do with preserving anonymity. All the names of the participants were changed, and certain characteristics of the context were also changed to avoid the identification of the school. In terms of the images, the use of drawings offers additional anonymity. My only concern is that teachers or students from the school have access to my data, as they might recognise themselves and others. However, there are two important counterpoints regarding this issue. Firstly, although in

my analysis I present some sensitive issues, particularly regarding teacher-student confrontations, there is no intention to express judgement about them or the participation of any of them in such confrontations. My analysis is centred on the way in which emotions emerge and are shaped in the context of the pedagogic practices that take place in the classroom. Secondly, the issues I present do not constitute awkward or extreme examples, but issues that could take place in many classrooms.

The third principle suggested by Hammersley and Traianou (2007) is reciprocity, which refers to giving something back to the participants. In my research I had the opportunity to support the activities in the school in several ways. I helped in the organisation of the school for the use of ICT, I offered support to the teachers and helped in any way I could while I was collecting data. I gave workshops and engaged in respectful conversations, without disclosing any information that they shared with me that was private or confidential (all my data fall into this category). Afterwards, I have replied to teachers' emails and offered information when they have contacted me after my time in their schools, and I am willing to continue supporting them if they contact me in the future. I am very grateful to the teachers and the rest of the staff, and to the students that participated in my research.

Hammersley and Traianou's (2007) last ethical principle is equity, which refers to treating in an equal way all the individual participants or group with which the research is in contact. I have also followed this principle as I established relations based on equality within the school community and reflected also about possible power issues that could be involved in my research (Edwards, Sebba and Rickinson, 2007). For example, I respected the knowledge that teachers have about their teaching and engaged in dialogues about their plans for using ICT to support teaching and learning.

Finally, in relationship both to the participants and to products of my research no harm was done to any person involved or to anyone that will be in contact with the results of my research (Hammersley and Traianou, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln express their commitment with which I agree:

We want a social science that is committed up front to issues of social justice, equity, nonviolence, peace, and universal human rights. We do not want a social science that says it can address these issues if it wants to. For us that is no longer an option (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 13).

My research is committed to a better understanding of both emotions in a broad sense, and teacher practices. I hope this contributes to the understanding of certain human emotions and to the acceptance of emotions as part of the practices that take place in the classroom. In addition, I hope my research contributes to the understanding of issues of diversity in classrooms, participation, power relations and collective learning, which are important current issues in urban secondary schools. Eventually, I hope that a better understanding of emotions in the classroom will lead in the direction of equity and human rights in schools.

### ***Methodological possibilities and limits***

In this section I only discuss methodological possibilities and limitations of the study, as I engage in further discussion in the final chapter.

The main limit of my research is that after offering a comprehensive approach to the study of emotions, my research engages with behaviours and actions, but does not study the biology of emotions, if that seems the implication of the case made against dichotomies. Nevertheless, the wide and embracing perspective established here has another purpose, to set the grounds for engaging in discussions among researchers in the field of emotions. Certainly, my empirical work only contributes by studying emotions in the context of the classroom, however, in the section of future research, in Chapter 10, I discuss this research constitutes a needed step into a needed dialogue with other psychological perspectives.

The volume of data analysed and presented is reduced, but the level of detailed analysis is deep. The intention of the data is not to offer grand conclusions, but to show the difficulty of isolating emotions from the context in which they emerge, which is achieved throughout the analysis. On the other hand, the analysis of such short extracts, was fundamental to enable such a depth engagement with the data analysed.

Finally, there is also the issue of the influence of the observer and the camera on the emotional landscape of the classroom, which I show specifically in one of the data chapters. The influence of the camera in the situation was clear at the beginning, with students, for example, saying hello to the camera every time they saw or passed in front of it. However, this changed over time, when teachers and students got used to its presence and to my presence as an observer.

## **Wrapping up**

In this chapter, I have presented my research design and I have discussed various issues that constitute the foundations of the empirical work, namely considerations about how emotions have been researched, the use of video in research, epistemological considerations, ethical issues involved and some possibilities and limits of this study. In Chapter 10, I come back to discuss the implications of my work for future research.

## Chapter 5 – Foci for approaching emotions

My innermost beliefs are all out there, embodied in practices that reach even to the immediate materiality of my body

(Zizek, 2008, p. 662)

### Introduction

In Chapter 3, building on the ways in which psychology has studied emotions, I argued that a unified study of emotions can help us to overcome the problems of treating emotions as either individual or social. This unified view together with a historical approach would, I argue, help us to study emotions without an artificial split between their individual and social aspects. Up to this point, however, I have only presented the elements suggested in Vygotsky's psychological approach to delineate the way in which emotions are embedded in social life. Then, I presented the methodological decisions in the previous chapter. In this chapter, in order to address the question, *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?*, I develop three foci. These foci consist of three distinctive theoretical concepts that extend the question and that I use to analyse emotions in the context in which they take place, which is the classroom. The foci are: context, social practice (which from now on I call practice), and microhistory.

The foci appear not to have been used together before this research. I came to them through my engagement with sociocultural and CHAT literature, in search of possible resources that could clarify my analytical priorities and give firmer direction to the empirical work and the analysis of the data. The three foci overlap, but they shift the focus point of the analysis of the microsituations. Of course, concepts are not isolated from a paradigm. On the contrary, the foci offer a rich ensemble of understandings, which facilitate the analysis. The way in which each of them is constructed offers a slightly different perspective on the same phenomena, offering new lenses and enabling a different outlook on different elements in a particular microsituation. The unity of the foci is provided by the shared or coherent epistemological stand of the literature that informs them.

This chapter is divided into three sections to deal with the three foci: (1) context, (2) practice, (3) microhistory. Each section comprises three elements: a general description of the concept, a discussion of its importance, and some specific points that extend the initial research question from the point of view of the particular focus presented. The

elements that constitute each of the foci are used for the analysis of data in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

## **Context**

The concept of context has been broadly studied in sociocultural approaches, particularly in relation to the fact that learning and knowing are context bound (Lave, 2008; Lave and Wenger, 1991b). Context is presented as the first of the three ‘approaches’ to the study of emotions, an underlying assumption of which is that, as we have seen, their social *and* individual aspects are inseparable. Because emotions are both individual and social we need to understand the situation in which emotions occur, i.e. the context that frames both of these elements. This ‘situational’ space and time is the context and individuals are a part of it. Thus, the context is not an aggregate of elements, and understanding emotions implies understanding the context in which they emerge. Individuals are not surrounded by a context, they actually live in a context and contribute to its construction. This makes it necessary to theorise the context, and understand the way in which emotions are linked to or situated as part of it. In this section, I discuss two alternative views about the context, and I present the questions that my research aims to answer in relation to emotions in context.

Cole (1996) has pointed to the complexity implied in the concept of context, particularly in relation to cognition. Cole (1996) has underlined how fatally obstructive the isolated understanding of cognition has been. ‘Cognition’ and ‘the situation in which it takes place’ have often been separated from each other, assuming that the former could be de-contextualised and understood as an independent object of study. This has given a very limited view to the understanding of cognition in psychology, with regards to everyday life. Cole cites Dewey noting that “in actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; an object or event is always a special part, phase, or aspect, of an enviroing experienced world –a situation” (Dewey, 1998, p. 67, cited by Cole, 1996 p. 132).

Following Burke’s (1969) argument, when he explains the meaning of substance (substance, as something that stands underneath), the very idea of context often implies that the understanding of ‘a thing’ takes place through the understanding of that which surrounds or supports that ‘thing’. Therefore the understanding of the context becomes the understanding of what that ‘thing’ is not. Nevertheless, context actually implies the object (of study) and the ‘situational’ space and time in which it is embedded. For this

reason, it is important to understand that context does not refer to that which supports or surrounds the ‘thing’ under study, but to that whole, of which that ‘thing’ is part. This has been the case in relation to the study of emotions, which have often been studied in psychology as independent features of the human personality or the human life. I argue that we can learn something important about emotions as sociocultural phenomena by treating them as socially contextual in the above way. To understand the importance of this idea more fully, we need to think about these different analogies of context in more detail.

### ***Ideas about Context***

Cole (1996) identifies two main conceptions of context among social scientists: context as *that which surrounds* and context as *that which weaves together*. Both of them shed light on the meaning of this concept. The first characterisation considers context as “the whole situation, background, or environment relevant to a particular event” (Cole, 1996, p. 132). The environment then encircles the event under scrutiny, keeping the event within the circle. Also concentric circles could be drawn to represent different contextual levels, in which the outer ones shape and in a way explain the inner ones. The event (or ‘thing’) under scrutiny would then be part of all the concentric circles’ surfaces drawn around it. Cole (1996) relates this image to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological view of human development. For Bronfenbrenner, context can be conceived as “a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls” (1979, p. 3; also an example can be found in Unwin *et al.*, 2007). Indeed for Bronfenbrenner, the performance in one level depends on the supports (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole and Cole, 2001) and possibly as well on the demands emanating from the outer settings.

Cole and Cole (2001) present a quite integrated diagram of the context as concentric circles. In it, they define five levels from the outer to the most immediate or internal: the macrosystem, the exosystems, the mesosystems, the microsystems and the individual. Microsystems involve the interactions between the child and his/her closest one-to-one interactions with parents, siblings, teachers, or other adults and peers in the diverse settings. The mesosystems involve four settings where the interactions in the microsystems happen: home, school, religious settings, and neighbourhood. The exosystems include social institutions in which the child does not participate, but that have an impact on the mesosystems: local industry, mass media, parent’s workplace, local government and school board. The macrosystems are the dominant beliefs and ideologies that organise all the systems in the mesosystemic level.

The second conception of context pointed to by Cole (1996) (i.e. context *as that which weaves together*) is linked to the etymological root of the Latin word *contextere*, and in order to delineate this meaning he refers to the whole that gives coherence. In this view of the context, the tissue of a particular situation is defined by the multiple threads that are part of it. As Cole points out, in this understanding, context cannot be reduced to that which surrounds: it is, rather, a qualitative relation between a minimum of two analytical entities (threads), which are two intertwined elements of a single process. The boundaries between ‘task and its context’, for example, are not clear-cut and static, but ambiguous and dynamic. Going further with this approach, context also implies the process of threading, the way in which the tissue is not completely predefined, but it is being woven.

### ***The importance of ‘context’***

Other research areas, outside the field of the study of emotions, have made good use of the turn to ‘context’. The context-bound character of learning and knowing, for example, has been widely researched in sociocultural theory and activity theory research, as I pointed out above. For example, learning has been recognised as situated (Lave and Wenger, 1991a; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff and Lave, 1984), and the process of learning as a process of participation that goes from the periphery to more central positions in a particular practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991b). Similarly, it has been acknowledged that cognition is not only ‘in the heads’ of isolated actors, but is distributed both in the actions and the organisation of actors’ actions, as much as in artefacts (objects and tools) (Cole, 1996; Cole and Derry, 2005; Hutchins, 1995; Hutchins, 2006; Salomon, 1993). Individuals’ learning takes place in such a way that it is embedded in communities of practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999; Lave and Wenger, 1991a; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002) and ‘activity systems’ (Daniels and Warmington, 2007; Engeström, 1987; Engeström, 1999; Engeström, 2008; Engeström and Middleton, 1998).

Sociocultural and CHAT approaches have reshaped ‘learning’, and, instead of reducing it to an individual transformation as a result of a process of ‘acquisition’, it is seen as a process by which participation changes (Lave and Wenger, 1991b; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff et al., 1993; Rogoff et al., 2003) (Sfard, 1998). More widely, the processes of learning imply not only individual achievements (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, 1999; Engeström, 2000; Engeström, Miettinen and Punamäki-Gitai, 1999), but also social achievements that sooner or later transform or expand practices



(Engeström, 1987; Kemmis, 2011; Lave, 2008; Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen, 2004; Reeves and Forde, 2004).

I argue that studying and reframing our understanding of emotions as situated can be useful to understand both their individual and social characters, as it has occurred with the understanding of cognition (Hutchins, 2000; Engestrom and Cole, 1997; Rogoff, 1990; Roth, 1996). This is the importance of the study of emotions in context.

### ***Emotions in context***

While there is very little work in the area of emotions as contextual phenomena, Roth's (2004; 2007b; 2011) work has been particularly important in developing a contextual view of emotions and, as such, is particularly relevant to the present study. Roth has pointed to the link of emotions to cognition in his study of emotions at work. Through his 5 year length ethnographic research project in a salmon hatchery in a qualitative study undertaken for five years, Roth challenges traditional psychology by showing the importance of emotions at work and in relation to work related knowledge, and their impact on the derivative phenomena of motivation and identity.

Based on Vygotsky's understanding of the unity of emotions, practical actions, and reasoning, Roth sustains that within this unity the three elements are dialectically related, in the sense that they "presuppose and influence one another" (Roth, 2007b, p. 44) . In his work, Roth emphasizes, on the one hand, that emotions mediate and shape actions; second, that on the other hand, that then actions and their outcomes shape emotions and emotional valences. His analysis of the pitch and speed of talk, collected through his participation in diverse tasks at the site, as a mere observer of events and as an informal interviewee, show the pervasive presence of emotions at work, with both positive and negative valences. According to his findings, there are at least two very different aspects to emotion. Firstly, some of them are part of the grounds for forming goals and buying into collective motives. This constitutes a societal determination of individual intentional behaviour, which becomes conscious at mediating situated action. Secondly, and most importantly, according to Roth (2007), there are emotional dimensions that are not accessible to consciousness, but still mediate situated action, such as undertaking practical operations (Leontiev, 1974) or, as he presents in his data, forgetting to do certain tasks, for example.

From a focus on *context*, the question *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* can be refined with some specific questions in order to

facilitate the analysis. If classroom is the context where emotions are to be studied the questions are:

- Can emotions, as the affect involved in participation in social practices, be identified and disambiguated from the setting?
- When emotions are analysed in the context in which they emerge is it possible to identify if they have an impact in the transformation of both the world (the material reality, the practice, the activity, the task), and the relations among participants?

I argue that the answer to these questions can shed light on the understanding emotions in classrooms and without a split between their individual and social aspects.

## **Practice**

Individuals participate in the context of social practice or human practice, which I will call simply 'practice'. There has been a common preoccupation in different philosophical perspectives about the role of practice, or praxis and action (Bernstein, 1971). This has to do with the role of human activity, and in relation to what is specifically human in terms of the way in which we, human beings, transform the world of which we are part. This concern has resulted in a turn to practice not only in philosophy (Bernstein, 1971), but also in sociology (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and Savigny, 2001). Questions about praxis/practice/action have been dealt with in philosophical perspectives as dissimilar as Marxism, Existentialism, Pragmatism and Analytic Philosophy (Bernstein, 1971). Both practice and context have the same referent, i.e. microsituations in the classroom, but the literature about each of them offers different elements to engage with the data.

According to Schatzki (2001), in practice theory, *practices* become 'the primary generic social thing' for theorists in various social disciplines and philosophy, and supports the notion that the reference to practices aims to move 'beyond current problematic dualisms' (Schatzki, 2001, p. 1). In this section, however, I will concentrate on the way in which Vygotsky deals implicitly with the issue of practice, which is significant to build a psychological stance which allows us to approach the study of emotions without splitting their individual and social character.

The concept of practice has been used in sociocultural and CHAT perspectives in psychology (Chaiklin, 1993; Chaiklin, 2011; Chaiklin and Lave, 1993; Chaiklin,

Hedegaard and Jensen, 1999; Engeström, 1999; Foot, 2001; Lave, 2008; Lave, 2009; Lave and McDermott, 2011; Lave and Wenger, 1996; Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009), and it has also been used in sociological research (Bourdieu, 1977a; Bourdieu, 1977b; Bourdieu, 1990). In education, it has mainly been used in the expression ‘educational practice’ (Schön, 1991), but ‘practice’ has also been used from a sociocultural stance (Daniels, 2001; Daniels, Cole and Wertsch, 2007). I decided to use it, however, because as I argue that human emotions emerge, change and develop as part of the participation in practices, I considered that having ‘practice’ as one of the focus for the empirical study of emotions could shed light on particular aspects associated with this concept. In actual terms, ‘practice’ overlaps with ‘context’, as both of them are the *milieux* in which emotions emerge and develop. Context is the fabric that is being woven in a microsituation; practice involves the action of weaving the microsituation. In spite of this, or precisely because of this subtle difference, there are certain concepts that have been associated with the concept of ‘practice’ but which are not necessarily conceptually linked with the concept of ‘context’ (which is the reason for my idea of using the four foci). In this section, I explore in greater detail what I understand by ‘practice’ and I identify certain implications for the study of emotions with the aim of overcoming the artificial separation between emotions as individual and emotions as social.

In general terms, there has been an increasing interest in practice theories in sociology, a turn to practice (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and Savigny, 2001). Schatzki (2001) sustains that this turn is

making decisive contributions to contemporary understandings of diverse issues...[such as] the philosophical and social scientific significance of human activity; the nature of subjectivity, embodiment, rationality, meaning, and normativity; the character of language, science, and power; and the organization, reproduction, and transformation of social life (Schatzki, 2001, p. 1)

However, research about practice does not hold a unified view about how *embodiment* in practice takes place. The views of embodiment vary: in relation to the body, to objects or artefacts to how understandings, knowledge and consciousness are intertwined within practices, and also, how our actions represent ‘embodiments’ which comprise all the previous understandings. Nevertheless, Schatzki (2001) finds two common elements in the account of embodiment in ‘the practice approach’. First, research in this approach develops an account of practices (for example scientific practices, or professional practices), presenting practice in a descriptive manner, as it is done through ethnographic work, in a phenomenological manner. Secondly, researchers

in this approach “treat the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter” (Schatzki, 2001, p. 2), whatever their specific area of interest is.

Practice has to do with human action(s) that transform both ‘the world’ and the human beings within it. Practice refers to human action and it implies the participation in the social world, and thus practices are by definition social activities. When we think about practice as a human action and consider human beings as part of the world, there seem to be a similarity in relation to the discussion in the previous section, as it is difficult to separate ‘the thing’ (the object of study) and its ‘context’, and in this case ‘the thing’ and ‘the practice’ of which it is part. However, the focus on ‘practice’ can help in the understanding of the ways in which emotions are embodied in them, and so their role as part of practices in terms of intentionality and awareness, in the production, reproduction and transformation of the current conditions.

### ***Practice and activity***

In terms of the construction of the object of study of psychology, the issue of ‘practice’ has been left aside. For this reason, it is a novelty that Cole (1996) has approached this issue when he examines practice in his search of the grounds for the construction of a cultural psychology. Cole (1996), however, has to embark in this task resorting to sociology (rather than psychology). In his review he finds some fruitful ideas regarding practice. First, meaning is not only ‘in the minds’ (as thoughts) of people, but also ‘in practices’, and finding an embodiment of meaning in actions and meanings are ‘modes of social relation’ and ‘mutual action’(Taylor, 1987), as “common language in any society is rooted in its institutions and practices... (and it is also) constitutive of these institutions and practices” (Taylor, 1987, p. 58)

Then, in Giddens’ (1979) theory of structuration, Cole finds practices as the basic constituents of the social system, and as the path to socialisation. In practices there is no separation between individual and social, as the process of structuration involves a duality: the social system produces the individual and *vice versa* – structure is both the medium and the outcome of the reproduction of practices (Giddens, 1979). Finally, in Bourdieu’s (1977b) perspective, Cole underlines the concept of *habitus*, which encompasses on the one hand, a matrix of dispositions and habitual life experience that result from material conditions. According to Cole (1996), the basis of the fact that ‘history’ becomes ‘nature’ lies within this process, which means that the dispositions

built in a certain society are then interpreted in psychology as emerging from ‘nature’, i.e. from the physiological functions that are supposed to be the basis of a great deal of psychological research. Simultaneously, in Cole’s (1996) review of Bourdieu, on the other hand, the concept of habitus also encompasses the setting of principles that generate practices in a society. Bourdieu (1977b) aims to transcend the dichotomy between an objective and a subjective world (Cole, 1996) in sociological disciplines, and with the concept of *habitus*, he finds a way to integrate individual and social aspects of human life, in spite of building his view in sociological research.

A practice orientation in research has led to the development of vocabularies and approaches that acknowledge that “bodies and activities are ‘constituted’ within practices... practices are the chief and immediate context within which the preponderance of bodily properties crucial to social life are formed, not just skills and activities but bodily experiences, surface presentations, and even physical structures as well” (2001, p. 2), including the way in which the brain ‘works’ while individuals ‘perform’ as part of practices. In this way, when a ‘practice approach’ is developed, practice becomes the linchpin. Studying emotions from the perspective of practices can offer another ‘focus’ to the analysis of emotions in the classroom.

Finally, although practice theories tend to emphasise the repetitiveness of practice (Reckwitz, 2002), Vygotsky underlines the creative character of human practices. Meittinen and colleagues refer to the importance of creativity attributed to work:

‘work’ is understood as a prototype of creative activity mediated by tools and cultural artefacts and as a process in which humans simultaneously create both themselves and their material culture (Meittinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009, p. 1316)

Similarly, Vygotsky interpreted practices not simply as patterns of action in a preexisting world, but also as sources of transformation, because “by acting on the world, we transform it by understanding it better” (Edwards, 2007, p. 91).

Engeström (1987) and other sociocultural studies emphasize the creative part of the process when he develops his concept of expansive learning. In his study of activity systems (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, 1996; Engeström, 2000; Engeström, 2004), the processes of learning have to do with a collective zone of proximal development in which it is not the individual who brings about novelties, but there is a process of collective transformation that emerges when participants in an activity face the contradictions that obstruct the transformative process of the ongoing activity.

Therefore, the participation in activities, far from being a normative endeavour in which the activity is repeated once and again, participation entails in itself the seeds of change.

### ***Importance of ‘practice’***

According to Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow (2009), practice theories are engaged in two ‘distinct but complementary motives’ in relation to research. On the one hand, they have an empirical programme, which is to understand social and organisational life. Practice is then

something that people do in ‘real’ or everyday life. The doings of everyday life are seen as constituting a foundation for social order and institutions. What people do every day to get their work done, in this view, itself constitutes an explanation of social life, and it enjoys full explanatory status, substituting (in the hands of anthropologists, in particular, and the conversation analysis branch of ethnomethodology) for theories, explanations, norms or ideologies. (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009)

This marks an important difference in terms of empirical focus, i.e. as the focus is not the collective mind independent of the collective ‘matter’, nor chains of signs and symbols that constitute texts or discourses, not even an ensemble of interrelations among agents (Reckwitz, 2002); when a research object is studied on the basis of a ‘practice approach’, as in this case emotions, there is not an “idea that mind is a substance, place, or realm that houses a particular range of activities and attributes”, and there is not an idea that mind is only a matter of meaning produced through language (Schatzki, 1996, p. 22), but a matter of meaning and intentions embedded in artefacts and active performances, which interplay in complex ways.

On the other hand, according to Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow (2009), the second motive is linked with a theoretical aspiration to transcend ‘perennial problems’ in philosophy and social sciences, such as Cartesian dualism and the agency-structure problem. In this research agenda, practice theories seem able to solve “philosophical problems concerning knowledge and the nature of reality, as well as theoretical problems in the social sciences concerning social order” (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009, p. 1311), where knowledge and cognition are inseparable from the bodily interaction with the environment, which is mediated through artefacts (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009). For these scholars actions both reproduce structures and transform them. “‘Practice’ has not only a theoretical agenda but also a methodological one. Studying a living practice ‘here and now’ and relating it to the history of practice and to larger institutional contexts is an extraordinary challenge” (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009, p. 1314).

In recent decades ‘practice’ has become part of the vocabulary of sociology and ethnography, while ‘activity’ has mainly been used by scholars in Vygotskian traditions, and particularly in those whose work started in the Nordic area, and closer to the Russian tradition, i.e. activity theorists. Activity theory focuses, however, on the study of ‘activity systems’, which are local systems in which subjects and their communities establish a relation to the world of which they are part, and that relation is established in a purposeful way. This is because activities are ‘bound up’ with the concept of ‘motive’ (Leontyev, 1977), as activities are ‘motivated’ towards it. “The activity of people working together is stimulated by its product” (Leontyev, 1977, p. 6).

The relations between subjects, communities, and the ‘object’ of an activity are mediated by culture. Cultural mediation takes place through the use of tools and artefacts, through the division of labour and through the presence of rules (Engestrom, 1987). Artefacts are not only ‘material’ objects, as they also portray reason or intentionality that is implicit in its production. Such a reason is tacitly offered to subjects while they participate in activities. Artefacts used as part of a particular practice are both matter and ‘mind’ (Cole and Derry, 2005). For example, a cup is not only a piece of clay, as it has an implicit purpose that is materialised in its shape and which is to contain liquids to be drunk. Additionally, tools are both material and symbolic, and language is part of the tools (Cole, 1996). The rules mediate between subject and community while the division of labour mediates between community and object (Engestrom, 1987).

Finally, in the wider scheme of activity theory, the term ‘action’ has a particular meaning, as it refers to specific tasks undertaken by subjects who participate in an activity system.

We regard action as the process that corresponds to the notion of the result which must be achieved, that is, the process which obeys a conscious goal. Just as the concept of motive is correlative with the concept of activity, so the concept of goal is correlative with that of action (Leontyev, 1977, p. 6).

Also, while actions are consciously oriented to goals, ‘operations’ are unconscious (Leontyev, 1974).

There is, in practice theory, however, another element that has to do with the purpose of research: a political agenda to transform the world (Vygotsky, 1997b). This agenda consists of acknowledging the teleological aspect of science, and not reducing science to the causal one. According to Chaiklin (2012), research would have to identify and

conceptualise what kind of knowledge could be useful for the transformation of a practice as a departure point. In order to do so, he suggests that it is necessary to specify the use of a ‘specific kind of knowledge’ in the practice, what kind of knowledge could possibly improve the practice and the process by which it might become part of it (Chaiklin, 2012).

The characterisation of practice presented above has a number of implications for embarking on the data analysis. Firstly, the study of practices constitutes largely a descriptive approach, including the perspectives of those that participate and experience the practice. Secondly, the transformations that can be observed in practices, and reported by those that participate in such practices relate not only to products (goods or services), such as a clothes made by tailors or flight experiences by airplane crews (Hutchins and Clausen, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991b), but also, practices transform human beings. Finally, the study of embodiment in practice may entail a distinction between intentions that are both implicit (unconscious) or explicit (conscious) (Roth, 2007) for the participants in the practice.

### ***Emotions in practice***

From the perspective of sociolinguistics, Goodwin and Goodwin’s studies of emotions involve a close turn to the examination of practice. Specifically, Goodwin and Goodwin (2007) have looked at how emotions are situated, and present a close observation of emotions in action through video recordings of girls at play. Their research shows emotions as situated in the game in which the girls are engaged (Goodwin, 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin 2000; Goodwin, Goodwin and Yaeger-Dror, 2002). In these studies the analysis of situated action shows how emotions emerge and develop within interaction and as part of the ongoing task. The emotions have consequences both in the course of the practices studied, and in the social relations. Goodwin and Goodwin’s perspective and method allows us to locate emotions as part of practices:

these stances, whether outraged indignation, glee, etc. involve fully embodied practices, integrating syntactic choice, intonation, timing, and the tenor of a girl's body into a powerful display of emotionally charged action (Goodwin and Goodwin, 2000, p. 26).

Both in the concepts presented in the previous sections and in the study cited above, we can see that the study of practice does not reduce the study of emotions to a simple study of behaviours, as we might undertake with an analysis of the emotions in the relations within a pack of wolves, for example. The study of practice understands that individuals engage in a dual manner in practices (Cole, 1996; Lave, 1993). Practices



are partially determined by the purposes that precede their participation (the motive), by rules, artefacts, and division of labour, which are all part of the activity system. Second, practices themselves determine the immediate context. There is room for improvisation, as there is not a full script of actions. I argue that emotions emerge and are transformed as part of practice, but also that they contribute to the transformation of the practice.

All the attributes of the mind, such as understanding, desiring and knowing, are part of the practice (Reckwitz, 2002). This implies also the diverse parts of knowledge: know-how (tacit knowledge), interpretation (know-that, but also know-how), aims, routines and improvisation, are, as with social practice “a two-sided block of patterns of bodily behaviour and patterns of knowledge and understanding” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254). I argue that knowledge involves emotions as well as motivations, because all of them (knowledge, emotions in general and motivations) are intertwined as a part of practice, and a separation between knowledge and emotions would be artificial. Additionally, the ‘mental actions’ are not only a theme, but they are a ‘real’ part of practices (Reckwitz, 2002), as they are both interiorised and externalised *a la* Engeström (1999) as part of the participation in the activity system. “A ‘practice’ thus crosses the distinction between the allegedly inside and outside of mind and body.” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 252). As a consequence of all this, the struggle of emotions is not between mind and body (*as in* Descartes), but between thinking and feeling (Vygotsky, 1999), and in the engagement of individuals in the social world.

A third aspect to consider is that artefacts are part of practice (Cole, 1996; Engeström refs.) and “necessary components of practice” (Reckwitz, 2002) – understanding and using ‘things’ in a particular way as part of the practice. In this regard, Bateson’s (1972) example about a blind person using a cane offers a graphic illustration of the difficulty of separating artefacts from practices: it is difficult to identify where the person ends: is it in the handle of the stick, or in the tip of the stick that goes ‘tick, tick, tick’ on the floor and the surfaces around. The agent, so to speak, consists of the performance of practices. Thus, the individual is a knot of social relations, as Gramsci suggested, which are performed (Reckwitz, 2002). In this way, social practices are simultaneously bodily and mental routines. The individual consists of the unique crossing of different mental and bodily routines *in* one mind/body and in the interpretative treatment of this constellation of crossing. In brief:

We also need rich empirical studies that enable us to not only learn about diverse practices but also to develop our theoretical understanding of the various aspects of practice, such as the role of objects in them or the relationship between language and

embodied routines, power, and so forth. (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009, p. 1314)

Finally, the concept of *Perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994) which can roughly be translated as “life experience” (Ferholt, 2009, Veer, and Valsiner, 1994) capture the way in which individuals and the social world in which they participate come together. Such an experience entails both intellect and affect (Vygotsky, 1987, 1994), i.e. thinking and emotions (Gajdamaschko (2006). Indeed, individuals experience their participation in practices in a particular way, as the same situation “may be interpreted, perceived, experienced or lived through” (Van der Veer, and Valsiner, 1994, p. 354) by different people in different ways. Moreover, *life experience* does involves a performative understanding, and as Gajdamaschko (2006) underlines comprises both thinking and emotions. According to Mahn and John-Steiner, learning and creation are rooted in the ZPD and so in the ways in which “participants perceive, experience, and process the emotional aspects of social interaction” (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002, p. 48), because such experiences takes place as part of the participation in practices. Individual experience is rooted in the social world. Therefore, experience is neither passive, nor receptive. Experience does not go from an outside world into the individual; neither it goes from the inside of an individual out from them. Experience is an active engagement with the world: making and doing as part of a practice, while feeling and thinking. This includes, but is is not reduced to the interactions (emphasized by Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002) that take place as part of such a practice. *Perezhivanie*, which I will refer as *life experience*, is a part of the ZPD and creates diversity in the participation and learning experiences of individuals in a concrete setting.

From a focus on *practice*, the question *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* can be refined with some specific questions in order to facilitate the analysis. If we analyse emotions as part of the specific practices that take place in a classroom the questions are:

- How are emotions embodied in the social practices that take place in classrooms?
- Can different ‘life experiences’ be identified for diverse participants in a practice?
- What are the functions of emotions?
- Can the role of emotions in the reproduction and transformation of practices be inferred?

The focus on practices, I argue, can be useful for a closer understanding of emotions in classrooms.

## **Microhistory**

‘Historical analysis’ is a key element in Vygotsky’s approach (Scribner, 1985). A historical approach to an object of study implies the analysis of its transformation. In both ‘context’ and ‘practice’ the transformation of the situation is implicit, but if we put the transformative processes (of emotions) at the centre, I argue, that new elements in the understanding of emotions, emerge. Microhistory time, which marks duration and pace, is always implied in a phenomenon. In this section I present a third focus of analysis, which is needed to understand the development or unfolding of the present time in microhistory. This is the level of history in which interactions take place. Time is the central aspect of this third approach to the analysis of the data.

### ***Microhistorical change***

Microhistory is the study of situations that take place in interactional time. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, history involves a teleology. In microhistory, the present is not a linear unfolding from the past, but also a pulling to the future, implicit in the motive of being in a classroom, students’ learning, which in turn is translated into the particular plans and goals formally brought about primarily by the teacher in a classroom setting. This pulling from the future implies intentions, which are negotiated, with the emergence of ‘surprises’ or unplanned actions.

A microhistorical focus for the study of emotions, situates them and acknowledges that they are constituted in social settings and micro activities, rather than having an existence outside or independently of those activities. The tension between the impacts from the past and the pullings to the future is negotiated in the present time of microhistory. All the other levels of history, as well as evolution, have an impact from the past and are moving in the present. This latter point means that evolution and history (general history, the history of individual societies and cultures, and the ontogenies of the individuals participating in a situation) are moving in the present (microhistorical point –or sequence of events–) at a different pace.

The pulling to the future has an implication for development. Development has often been seen as driven by physiology, and Vygotsky’s ideas helped us acknowledge the

importance of culture and history in the development of children whose biological changes grow into and intertwined with culture (Cole and Cole, 2001) from birth to adolescence. However, the development of human beings transcends the moment in which the body reaches biological ‘maturity’.

Additionally, Engestrom’s (1996) criticism of developmental theories is relevant to understand issues emerging in microhistorical situations. Child development, and more generally lifelong human development does not have to do only with developing mastery as ‘continuation’ or ‘positive’ or ‘benign’ (Engestrom, 1996), following up from the culture built by previous generations. Child development also involves partially ‘destructive rejection of the old’, which means that the achievements from previous generations are not fully embraced by the younger ones, but are ‘criticised’ sometime implicitly, sometimes explicitly. ‘Surprises’ lead to the opening of new possibilities, in terms of potential recomposition of tasks and goals at the local level (Engestrom, 1996). There is a particular age in which this happens more often, which is adolescence. This period of life has been acknowledged as a period of turmoil (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009) and of questioning the old even to the level of promoting social change (Sherrod et al., 2006) and having a ‘prefigurative’ (McCowan, 2010) aspect which brings about new possibilities to the future.

Nevertheless, ‘questioning’ and changing ‘the old’ is not reduced to adolescence, as adults can ‘grow’ horizontally and change, thanks to the participation in practices, particularly practices that involve doing together and establishing dialogues. There might be contradictions embedded in the social space of the classroom in which ‘the old’ is being questioned, maybe more often by adolescence indeed, but sometimes also by the teachers. The ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky, 1987) is not only a zone of moving ‘upwards’ towards ‘mastery’ with the help of those more capable. It is, on the contrary, a ‘zone of construction’ (Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989) or a ‘contact zone’ (Kramsch, 1993), i.e. a third space (Gutierrez, Rymes & Larson, 1995) in which “important learning and development takes place as people and ideas from different cultures meet, collide and merge... to form new meanings that go beyond the evident limits” (Engestrom, 1996, p. 8) of both the cultures of teachers and students. What needs to be underlined regarding the ‘questioning’ and changing of ‘the old’ is that in microhistorical analysis, moments in which criticism emerges, can be identified, as well as the way in which emotions are part of those moments. This rejection is part of the negotiations that take place and can be identified when focusing on microhistory.

Engeström (1996) also challenges theories of development when he underlines that transformation in development is not only individual, but collective. In microhistory, elements of collective transformations can be identified. In particular, ‘configurations’ of the way in which teachers deal with emotions may suggest particular ways in which a group tends to transform and develop a collective working together. In some cases both individual and collective development does not take a movement towards developing mastery of something, but it can produce a different social space, even if it only reaches the local context. In Engeström’s terms, “instead of just vertical movement across levels, development may be viewed as horizontal movement across borders” (Engeström, 1996, p. 1). For example, a relationship between a teacher and their group can become increasingly friendly or, on the other extreme, increasingly confrontational. For this reasons, certain clues of processes can be identified through the focus in microhistory to infer the possibility of collective development in dialogue within a teacher and their class.

There seem to be tensions between the weight of the past, the present situation and possible futures. The weight of the past comes into the classroom in the different times and histories tied together in the present: evolution, general history, the history of Mexican culture(s), the local history of the school, the individual histories of the participants, and the history of the class working together. The cultural histories come to the classroom as tools and artefacts, rules and division of labour (Engestrom, 1987). Emotions are informed by all these pasts, but they are performed, and so updated in the present.

Finally, in microhistory, it is important to consider what Suchmann (1987) underlined long ago: that human actions respond to the tension between plans as the basis for action and the need to rise to the challenges of the ongoing situation. In microhistory we can observe this tension as part of the analysis of microsituations. Suchmann (1987) cites an article written by Gladwin (1964, quoted by Berreman 1966), in relation to the difference between Trukese and European navigators. The latter plan not only the objective, but also the whole course of their voyage; the former set off towards the final destination, but respond to the conditions (wind, waves, tide, currents, fauna, starts and clouds) and steer accordingly, doing whatever is necessary to reach their destination. In microhistory, ways of ‘navigating’ in the classroom by the teachers can be identified. However, the present, which includes the future with their intentions, is what is brought to the situation by all the participants in a practice.

### ***Importance of microhistory***

Microhistory is the closest approximation of studying what emotions are by studying how they become what they are in the present time. For Vygotsky, issues of genesis in terms of higher psychological functions come to the forefront (Scribner, 1985), and higher emotions, I argue, are part of that. For this reason, it is necessary to embark in a historical analysis of data to understand human traits, such as human emotions, in order to approach their complexity, which involves consciousness, behaviour as much as the unconscious.

All in all, in microhistory, it is possible to observe emotions' emergence and transformation as part of human participation in culturally shaped social practices and as part of their proximal environment (Cole and Cole, 2001), without ignoring that those settings are part of wider communities, including the level of the global. Moreover, the changes in emotions in a microhistorical situation may potentially lead to individuals' development, not only in the case of children and adolescents, but also in the case of adults. Even more, changes in emotions may also involve changes in the social relations and orientations to the object, and even changes *in* the object, even if those changes are circumscribed to the particular contexts in which they take place.

Finally, in microhistorical analysis the rebelliousness implied in the rejection of the old that students bring to the negotiations that take place in the classrooms can be analysed, as well as the emergence and transformation of emotions in this context. Also, the negotiations between students and their teacher offer different paths of collective transformations in particular classrooms, situating possibilities for the shaping of emotions according to their histories taking, and thus, creating structures of emotions.

### ***Emotions in microhistory***

A focus on microhistory for the analysis of emotions allows us to observe how emotions change over time as part of the participation in social practices. Emotions emerge both towards the activity itself and towards others. A microhistorical analysis not only presents the sequence of events, but the way in which different aspects come together, the relations between antecedent and consequent and plausibly, between cause and consequence, and the way that different functions can sometimes be the 'cause' of particular dynamic, and sometimes the 'consequence'. This can help to understand the functionality of emotions, as they emerge and are shaped through participation in social practices.

From a focus on *microhistory*, the question *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* can be refined with some specific questions in order to facilitate the analysis. If we analyse emotions in the classroom through time the questions to answer are:

- Can certain patterns of flow in the emergence and transformation of emotions that take place through time be identified in microsituations? In these patterns, are emotions a cause or a consequence?
- Does adolescents' negativity and rebelliousness influence emotions in the classroom and vice versa?
- What are the consequences of the emotional climates or environments created in teachers' classes?

Microhistorical analysis can support the understanding of the impact of past, present and future in the transformation and role of emotions in classrooms.

## **Wrapping up**

I have developed three overlapping, but clearly defined, foci (i.e. context, practice and microhistory) for undertaking the analysis of emotions in the classroom from a sociocultural perspective. The difference between the foci has allowed me to pose three sets of specific questions that facilitate a systematic analysis of the data in the empirical work undertaken.

## Chapter 6 – Cowboy Books: Emotions and Context

### Introduction

The aim of the data chapters is to engage in an attempt to use the theoretical approach established in Chapter 3 and the foci presented in Chapter 5 in relation to data. In the overall sense, my intention is to find out if such an approach is useful to explore how emotions could be studied from a sociocultural perspective. The aim of this empirical study is ultimately to address the question that leads this research by focussing on the three analytic foci defined in the previous chapter, namely: context, practice and microhistory. The discussion of these general issues and the role of these concepts in the production of a broader theoretical schema is undertaken in Chapters 9 and 10.

All the data chapters, 6 to 8 comprise two parts: a presentation of an excerpt of a video recorded lesson, and a discussion of the respective focus (context in this chapter) based on the evidence found through the empirical work. Chapter 9 also comprises two parts: a final excerpt of a video recorded lesson is presented, followed by the discussion that addresses the question that leads this research as a whole. This chapter might be identified as a ‘warming up’, as it offers the basic overview elements which will be further developed in the chapters to come. In it, I present a first excerpt of data, followed by the discussion about emotions in context, in order to address the question that leads this research (i.e. *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?*) with the lenses of the first focus.

There are two issues that I discuss in Chapter 4 that need to be borne in mind while reading the data chapters: the level of detail of micro-situation extracted as excerpts from the videos, and analysed in these chapters, and the elements comprised in the transcription of those microsituations. Regarding the level of detail, in order to make the transcriptions coherent with the frameworks presented so far, i.e. the sociocultural approach and the research design, the data that are analysed in this chapter and the three chapters to follow are rich in details. The excerpts, which are short in length, involve complete situations, i.e. situations with a beginning and an end that emerge from the situation. This detailed presentation of the microsituations allows a detail analysis of the



way in which emotions emerge and change during the process of participating in the social practice, as well as the impact of emotions in and on such a situation.

In relation to the elements comprised in the transcriptions, they are both descriptive and explanatory. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the layout of a transcription of a ‘micro-situation’ encompasses (1) transcription of talk, (2) descriptions and explanations about the situation, (3) vignettes that depict the scene (including overlapping images to offer the impression of movement), sometimes focusing on the main actors participating in the situation, and (4) arrows, circles and other indicators to give detailed information about direction and repetition of movement or to stress the main issues under analysis.. As mentioned above, observation notes and interview notes were used to support the elements involved in the second of these elements, and in the case of the explanations, they are also directly informed by my experiences in the local culture as a researcher, as a teacher and as a Mexican person. As mentioned in the methodology, all the participants have pseudonyms.

In this chapter, I argue that there is neither a clear-cut separation between emotions in individuals and the social situation in which individuals participate, nor can emotions be neatly separated from their ‘situational’ space and time. The fact that emotions are tied to the situation means that they are *constituted* in and *of* social practices. As a consequence, emotions and ‘the body’ cannot be ‘isolated’ from the social situation, i.e. from context. What seems clear is that we cannot cut biology from the social situation as everything biological is closely intertwined in it. I show how emotions ‘emerge’ and ‘take place’ in such a way that they are part of the social context as much as of the individuals’ actions. As emotions are enacted in the situation, their individual and social aspects co-construct each other.

### **The Cowboy Books in the classroom**

The first excerpt involves a teacher, Sofía<sup>6</sup>, working with a secondary third year group. In the situation presented, laughter takes place in the classroom and Sofía leads the group to reengage with the task on which they were working. In this micro-situation we can see how humour and laughter occur while working with curricular content, and what the teacher does when a student makes a joke. One might think that a joke followed by laughter more generally would interrupt the ‘flow’ of the learning activity in which the class is engaged; however, in this case, laughter flows in the development

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<sup>6</sup> As discussed, all the names are actually pseudonyms in order to ensure anonymity.

of the task. I will discuss how laughter is both a result of the actions and a resource that the teacher uses to lead towards the goal of the pedagogic task, and in that way, the objective of students' learning.

The excerpt is 1 minute and 18 seconds long. I was recording the interaction holding the video camera<sup>7</sup>. Sofía has organised the group so that they are seated in a circle. The class started with a discussion about values. A student, María, has just read out loud a reduced version of the first chapter of *Don Quixote* in contemporary Spanish, which also included a short commentary about the characters, and the overall argument of the classic book. This reading itself was not included in the textbook that the students follow. The book containing the reading was brought by Sofía, who lent it to María so that she could read. Before the reading, Sofía had commented that the reading was funny, and advised her class to pay attention, with the promise that they were going to do a very interesting exercise afterwards. After the reading, Sofía explained that she would formulate 'true' or 'false' questions and then she would choose who would have to answer them. She also added that if what she expressed was false, the students would have to say what the true statement was.

Sofía started by formulating the 'questions'. They were in fact statements that she was constructing on the spot by reading from the book and changing the content slightly. She was creating questions based on the chapter that Maria had read so that the students answered according to the reading to which they had just listened. In all the previous questions teacher and students had been laughing for diverse reasons (for example, the teacher made a little mistake in one question and everybody, including her, laughed). Figure 2 is a panoramic photo constructed from several shots of the video, and gives an idea of the distribution of the group, which is quite small (14 students).

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<sup>7</sup> In my fieldnotes (not too abundant in this session, because it is difficult to write while holding the camera) I wrote that during the discussion, I felt as if I were watching one of the discussion programmes (maybe similar to the BBC's "The Big Questions") transmitted on Channel 11 of the National Polytechnic Institute in Mexico.

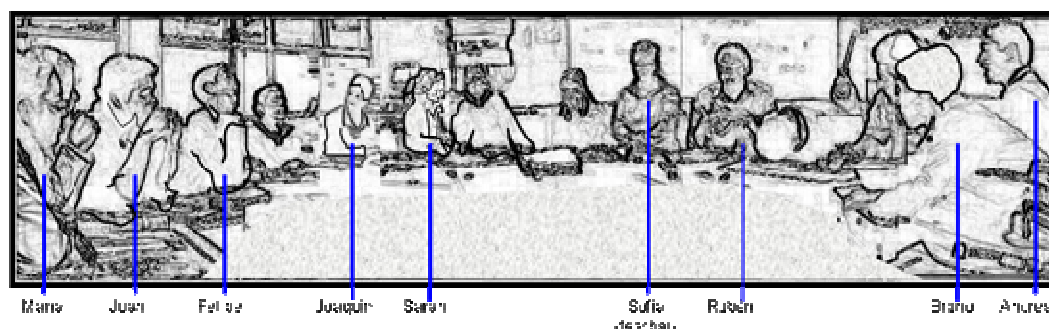


Figure 2. Sofia and the 14 students present in the Don Quixote session

### *Next question*

The point at which the excerpt starts comes just after Sofía had been asking some questions. She poses a new question, the fourth question of this lesson. She has been smiling throughout the exercise. She is usually smiling, but I point this out because not many of the teachers that I observe smile as much as she does. While reading, she wears her glasses:

1. **Sofía:** Well... next question... (she puts her
2. spectacles on to read:) *he used to read... so*
3. *many books... so many... **fantasy** books...*
4. *that he spent the nights and the days without*
5. *sleeping...*

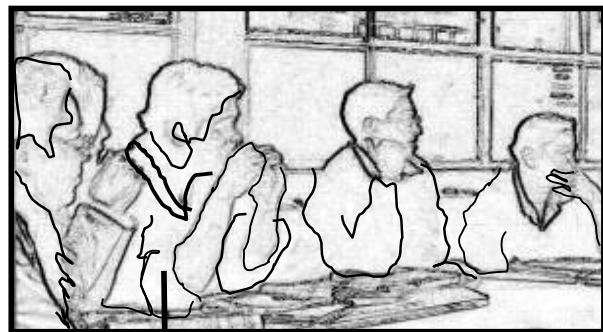


Sofía changes the word ‘knight’ (in ‘knight books’) to the word ‘fantasy’. She then looks for someone to answer the question by moving her head from one side of the group to the other, looking at the students. When she finds Juan with her gaze, she points towards him with her chin by moving her head up, while smiling (line 6). He is not pictured, so it is possible that he had announced that he wanted to answer the question, or that she chose him.

6. **Sofía:** ...let's see...

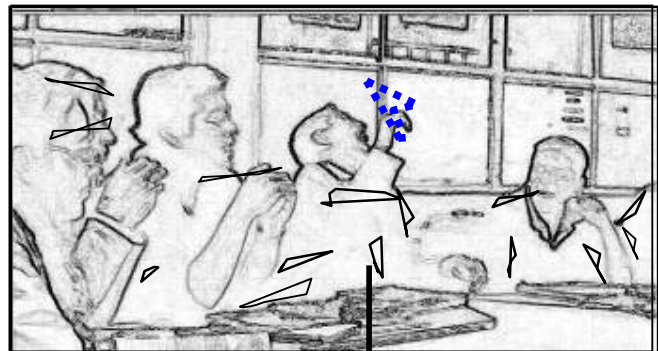


7. **Juan:** He read *Cowboy Books*



Juan

8. Noisy laughing from everybody,  
9. including Sofía



Felipe

Juan answers with seriousness, as if he were going to give the right answer. Then, everybody laughs, including Sofía. However, Felipe is laughing so much that he hits the table twice with his right hand to reinforce how funny he found Juan's answer, as we will see below. Juan just made a joke. Laughter and 'enjoyment' emerge situated and tied to the joke that Juan brings about.

At this point, I have to make a detour in the following paragraphs to explain why answering that Don Quixote read *Cowboy Books* was regarded as a funny joke.

### ***Cowboy Books are a funny answer***

The ‘Cowboy Books’<sup>8</sup> (Figure 3, below) are an important part of Mexican popular culture. They are actually not books, but comics of which about 400 thousand copies are printed per week (n.d.; Tercero, 2005). However, the comic was most popular in the mid 80s, when between 63 million (Tercero, 2005) and 78 million copies (López Parra, n.d.) were produced per year. The first issue appeared on 23 November 1978, with the title *Racimo de Horca* (López Parra, n.d.) and since then, it has been produced without interruption.

The comic narrates love stories between a cowboy and a woman. The format is a colourful pocket booklet. According to one of its creators, Rafael Márquez, unlike American cowboys, these Mexican cowboys kill each other for the love of a woman. Also, such cowboys, according to Lopez Parra (n.d.) have “the arrogance of a North American, and the heart of a Mexican”. The *Cowboy Books* contain a certain amount of eroticism and violence. However, compared with the ‘porno-comics’ that started in the 90s, these comics do not present openly sexual scenes (López Parra, n.d.). However, they involve a particular view of women as passive and vulnerable, as well as voluptuose.



**Figure 3. The Cowboy Books**

*The Cowboy Books* started many years before these young students were born. However, the *fact* that Juan brings them up in the classroom and the general laughter suggests that they know the ‘books’ and their content.

Juan’s joke uses the homonymy of the word ‘books’ to bring about *The Cowboy Books*. The word is the same, but the meaning is different: in Sofía’s case it refers to the knight books Don Quixote used to read, while in the second case it is the name of

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<sup>8</sup> *Los Libros Vaqueros*

the comic. When Juan answers Sofía's question in this way, the situation seems funny, not only because of the substitution implied, but also because of the rupture of the prevalent usage in the school culture, where *The Cowboy Books* are not a usual topic in the classroom. The use is not an explicit rule, but it is clear that *The Cowboys Books* are not part of the official curriculum.

Additionally, Juan's answer is not the correct answer to the teacher's question, but it is not a mistake either. The answer should have been true or false; but it is – we can assume – an intentional diversion from the content of the lesson. Juan dares to bring about a joke based on the name of the comics in the context of Sofía's literature class. Additionally, the comic contains erotic content<sup>9</sup>. In spite of all these various divergences from the expectations set up in the curricular activity, it is important to underline that Sofía *follows* along with the joke by joining in the laughter. In the following section we will see how this happens.

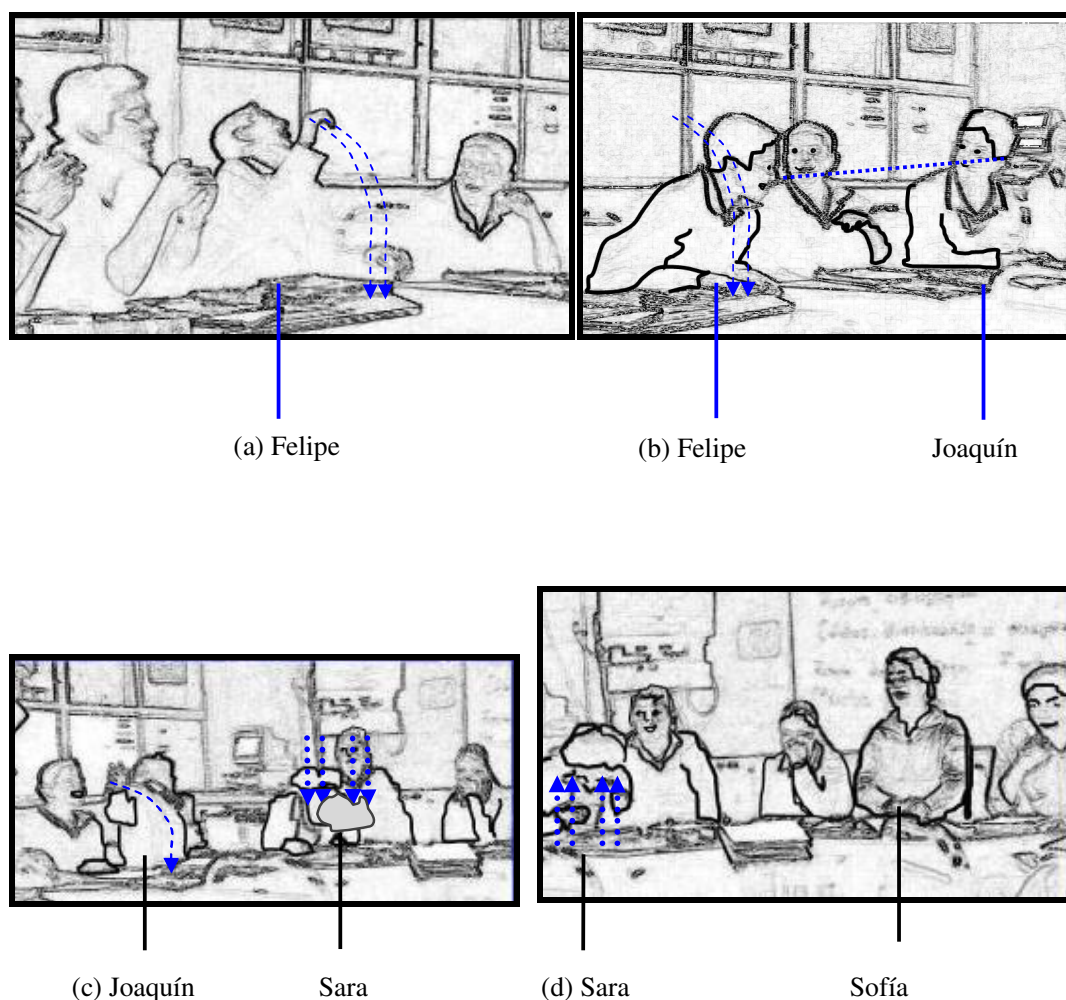
### ***Empathy towards the students***

In Figure 4 (Big cackles), we can see what happens when Felipe laughs. He does it by bouncing his body back (a), and hitting the table twice with his right hand. During the second impact on the table, Felipe and Joaquín look at each other (b) and then Joaquín bounces back even more than Felipe, facing the ceiling, and then he hits his table once (c). At this point, Sara also hits her table once with both hands (c and d).

As I mentioned above, Sofía joins in. She laughs for some few seconds (8 seconds, while the students' laughter lasts for about 30 seconds); by contrast with the students, apart from the duration she does it in a very self-contained manner (d), holding her left wrist with her right hand. The rest of the students that appear in the view of the camera are laughing as well, but their movements are not so wide.

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<sup>9</sup> There are some similarities between the knight books that Don Quixote read, and *The Cowboy Books*. Both 'books' are about men on horses, the heroes have 'Dulcineas' (a lady), and both kinds of 'books' can produce madness. In the common Mexican sense, masturbation causes madness. Some of these coincidences might contribute to the joke being so well received.



**Figure 4. Big cackles**

This difference in duration of the laughter between teacher and students might be an indication of a twofold meaning. On the one hand, the fact that Sofía laughs serves as an equaliser with the students, and an indication of her acceptance of the joke. On the other hand, she does not laugh noisily or with big gestural movements. In this sense, this laughter might be a way of discouraging the continuation of the laughter for a longer time. After all, Sofía is being observed in her performance as a teacher, and she is likely to want to offer a good impression. Also, one of her tasks as a classroom teacher is time management and has to move on to continue working with her group. Sofía is in charge of leading the task.

After this, Sofía makes an inaudible comment. It is not possible to discern exactly what she says from the recording, but it is clear that she is following the joke and laughing.

The word ‘yes’<sup>10</sup> can be distinguished in what she says. Then she moves her right arm down heavily with the palm facing upwards (line 10). Sofía seems to be empathically interacting with the students. The movements of the students have a certain degree of synchronisation (Bateson, 1972) and ‘echoing’ among them with one boy (Joaquín) following and responding to the boy who initiated the hitting (Felipe), and also with a girl (Sara) hitting the table as well. Sofía seems to ‘follow’ the movements, by moving her arm in the same direction (downwards). She also balances from side to side, which might be part of the accompaniment, although it could equally be a kind of ‘nervous’ movement related to being observed.

10. Sofía; ----<sup>11</sup> ... <sup>12</sup>yes .... (inaudible)



Sofía is responding ‘in tune’ to her students: first laughing, then assenting (‘yes’), and finally responding with the wide movement of her arm to the wide movements of the students. She is, in these small gestural and conversational ways, displaying rapport. These three ‘small’ actions seem to establish an empathic link between Sofía and her students. We can see how this empathy is also situated and tied to the situation, because Sofía responds to the emerging actions that the students undertake.

On the other hand, Sofía’s response could have been very different, laughing, saying ‘yes’ and moving the arm heavily downwards were not the only possible actions she could have taken. We cannot determine the process she followed in ‘choosing’ what to do, nor if her process implied any self-awareness or self-reflexivity, but we can observe that she displayed a kind of ‘tuned-in-ness’ with the students. Finally, we do not know what she is feeling – we know what she displays in the interaction as an observable

<sup>10</sup> She seems to say “oh yes, I know”.

<sup>11</sup> The sign ‘---’ in these transcriptions implies the overlapping of speech. In this case, she is overlapping with the laughter.

<sup>12</sup> Ellipsis (...) in these transcriptions implies conversation flow.

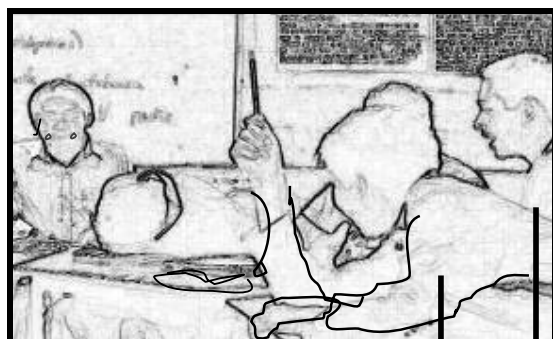


orientation towards the unfolding action and that within this, she *displays* empathy, and the students respond to that empathy.

Sofía's actions, then, seems to support the students' laughter, but at the same time, it seems to contain or constrain it. She allows and supports students' laughter by laughing, but she stopped laughing some time before they did, although she keeps smiling. She is, I suggest, containing their laughter by retracting her emotional involvement in the action of laughing, and without forcing the students explicitly to stop laughing through verbally chastising them, for example. The movement of her hand is accompanying the students' movement during their laughter, and simultaneously, the beginning of drawing a limit which she performs energetically downwards and, in contrast to the students, with her palm upwards. She seems to enjoy the joke – or at least, her behaviour suggests that she does. Also, at that point she briefly looks at the camera, and I wonder if that might be an indication of a worry about being observed and recorded.

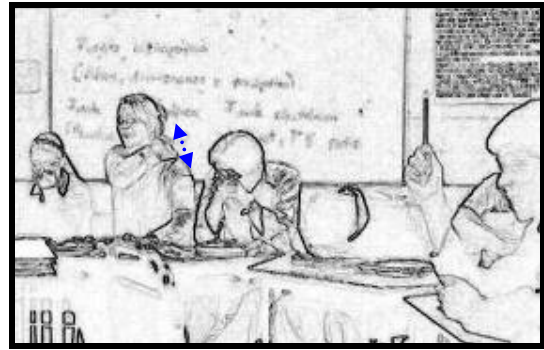
The class continues to laugh, and the students on the other side of the classroom support Juan's joke with attempts to 'develop it'. Maybe this is another attempt at empathy, but this time in a different direction, i.e. to continue the joke. However, as we can see in lines 11 and 12, Andrés's and Bruno's attempts to carry on with the joke do not seem to be very successful, because their classmates do not 'take up' the joke or act towards it as if it were funny. We can see this in the lack of reaction towards their comments, which contrasts with the success of Juan's joke.

11. **Andrés:** ---- if they are not yours...



Bruno Andrés

12. **Bruno:** ---- they were from my time...



Bruno's final comment seems to allude to the 'out of fashion' character of the *Cowboy Books*, mentioned above, as they had been particularly popular several years before. Alternatively, it could imply that the Cowboy Books are contemporary unlike the books that Don Quixote read. In any case, this joke does not seem funny to the group.

### ***Informality***

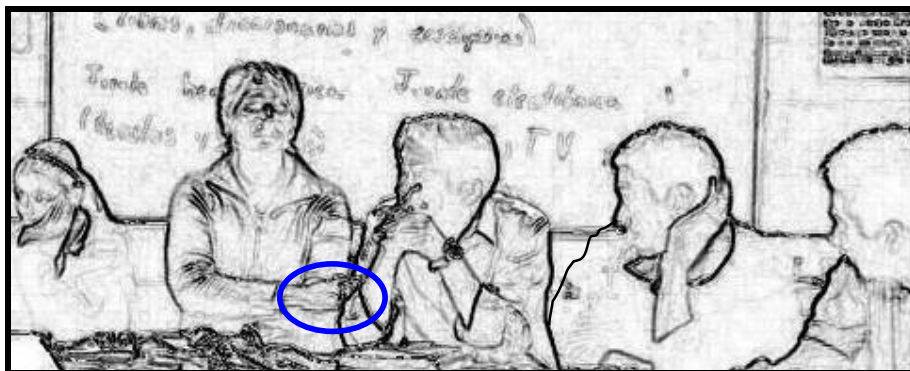
There is another aspect that may lead us to interpret Sofia's actions as a kind of empathy – that is, her marked informality. In line 12, we can see how she scratches her back, but she does it under her blouse in front of the class. The movements are possibly directed towards her own comfort (because she is feeling itchiness), but the way in which she performs these actions imprints on them an informal tone. These kinds of movements give the situation a sense of being at home or in an informal activity. She makes other movements that are similarly informal (as in Figure 5, where she rubs her neck).



**Figure 5. Being informal**

Along the same lines, at a certain point, she gives a student a quick pat on the arm (Figure 6) when he answers a question. The contact is fast, respectful and shows care, and, like the previous movement, it shows a certain 'informality' in Sofia's class, because it is not usual to touch students. Although in Mexican culture, touching others is socially permitted quite often in conversations with family, friends and even

acquaintances, in recent years, it has become even banned in schools to touch students. For this reason, giving a pat to a student, together with working in a circle and showing the gestures mentioned, contributes to creating this sense of informality.



**Figure 6. Giving a pat**

### ***Control and Power***

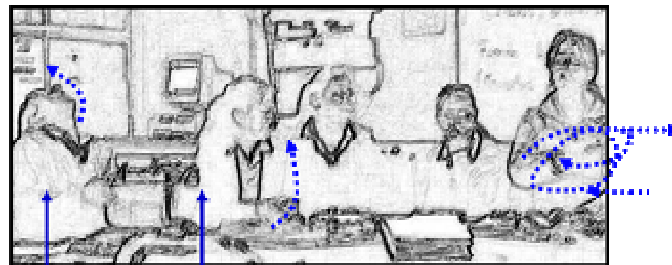
The acceptance of the joke might serve only as temporary a moment in the social encounter in order to be able to lead the students forwards in the activity; that is, to go back to the task at hand. The accompaniment or acceptance is not a capitulation. She laughs for a shorter period than the students, and when she laughs her body is quite contained in great contrast with the students' big movements, and then she moves her arm with an ample movement as a physical response to wide movements and laughter. In this sense, she does not admit defeat in terms of 'let us do whatever you want', as will become clearer in the following section.

After a few seconds (8), Sofía stops laughing. Bruno and Andrés's efforts to continue the joke are unfruitful, as we saw (lines 11 and 12). Immediately afterwards, Sofía clearly makes an attempt to take over again (lines 13 to 15).

13. **Sofía:** ---- (not clearly audible the  
 14. students are still laughing) wait –you  
 15. all– a little...



16. **Sofía:** ... (inaudible)...  
 17. no... look.. like  
 18. this... er er ... the  
 19. thing ...the thing is  
 20. like this...is...  
 .  
 21. **Girl?:** --- (inaudible)



Joaquín

Sara

22. **Sofía:** --- no, I asked him and he  
 23. has... to tell me... false...



Sofía starts directing the students back to the task. She repeatedly moves her right hand up and down giving the impression that she is pushing down (lines 13 to 15), as if she were saying ‘calm down’. Then she makes a circular movement with an extended hand as if trying to extend this ‘calm down’ to the boys on her left (right in the picture, where Bruno and Andrés, line 11, are seated); the movement ends with the index finger up (lines 16 to 21). Finally, she moves her finger twice towards Juan (lines 22 and 23) and ends pointing at him (line 24). The students’ laughs continue the entire time (30” as compared with the 8” that Sofía was laughing). Joaquín and Sara are laughing particularly loudly. Joaquín moves his head back (lines 16 to 19), as he had done before (in Figure 4, *supra*) and then twists his head towards his right (lines 22 and 23). Sara

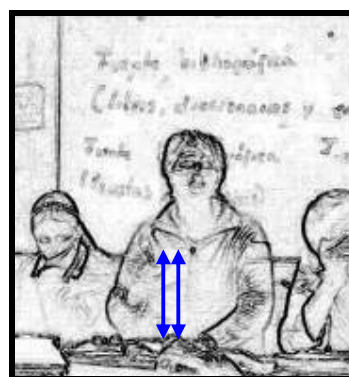
covers her mouth with her right hand (lines 16 to 21), and then she puts her head down and apparently continues laughing (lines 22 and 23).

In line 24, Sofía points to Juan briefly, and then quickly brings her arm towards her body. In lines 25 and 26, she emphasises the right answer by moving her hand up and down a couple of times and then she puts her hands together as if to enact the attitude: ‘that’s it’. At this point, she directs a quick glance at the camera (line 25 and 26). Afterwards she smiles at Juan.

24. **Sofía:** ... he should have said ...



25. **Sofía:** ...“truth... no, teacher, he read  
26. *Cowboy Books”*



Sofía’s intervention implied something like the following phrase: ‘your joke is fine, but you have to frame it according to the exercise’. In other words, she accepts the joke, but by accepting it, she reasserts her pedagogic position. So far, we have seen several clues, which I have been pointing out, that suggest that she was building a more interactionally powerful position. First of all, she started with the soft ‘calm down’ motion, pushing down with her hand, directing the movement towards the whole group (with circles), and saying ‘wait’. At this point she was speaking with pauses, using filler words or expressions, and in fact she sounded ‘hesitant’. The second clue is that she put her index finger up, which could be associated with a position of power, because it is a gesture commonly used for warning, usually from a person that has more recognised power, like a parent in relation to a child - or as in this case, a teacher in relation to the students. With her index finger up, she corrected the joke and models how the joke should have been presented to fit the rules of the exercise they are doing. In the third place, she does

not speak directly to Juan, but she speaks in the third person talking primarily to the students on the side opposite to Juan, which make him not her direct interlocutor. A fourth clue is that she points with her right index finger (the same one she used for the warning) very briefly at Juan, which in Mexico is considered very rude. Finally, in lines 27 and 28, she smiles at the camera (at me) with an expression that denotes that something has concluded. The smile towards Juan seems like a way of re-establishing a good relation with him. All these actions are complex semiotic acts (Goodwin, 2003a) embedded in the pedagogic practice taking place in the classroom.

The students' laughter continues, but is reduced and Sofía laughs with them.

27. Sofía laughs, alternating between looking at the camera and looking at  
28. Juan.



29. Sofía: ---- let's see...



### ***Answering the question***

Sofía leans to her right (line 29 –a–). The laughing continues being noisy, some additional beating on the tables can be heard. She waits for a few seconds (about 5”). She starts speaking again once the noise is reduced. She continues following their pace by patiently waiting for them to stop laughing. Immediately after this, she tucks her hair behind her ear (line 29 –b–). By itself, this gesture might only be satisfying the need to brush away the hair that was falling over her face, but within this situation, and her looking at the camera, this gesture might be related to some discomfort about the difficulty in coming back to work in a class that is being observed. This might be a small clue that implies a certain nervousness.

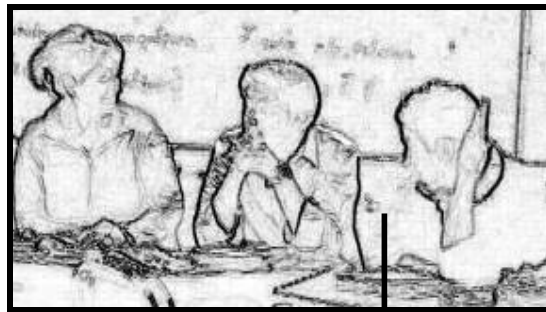
30. **Sofía:** ---- let's see...



31. **Sofía:** err... who wants to give  
32. me the right answer?



33. **Sofía:** ... eh?  
34. **Rubén:** it's true



Rubén

When she finishes the question (line 32), Sofía speaks in a serious tone, without laughing, which entails a considerable contrast to the previous seconds after the joke. She looks around trying to find someone who wants to answer the question as to whether or not the question is true or false about Don Quixote reading *fantasy* books. The student to her left, Rubén, must have said something that she hears because she asks 'eh?' while looking at him. Then he answers that her statement is true. She gives Rubén a quick pat on his arm as she asks for an argument that supports his statement. It is interesting that the answer is not correct, as it is not true that Don Quixote read *fantasy* books. Possibly, as I argue below, in the immediate time her interest is not in establishing truth, but in something else.

The pat could have various meanings; we cannot say that she is accepting his answer as true, but there are no clues in her comment that reflect that Rubén's answer is wrong. I would interpret this as Sofía's attempt to build and strengthen the relationship. The fact

that she does not simply say “you are wrong” could possibly be associated with her efforts to bring the students back to the task. This is something that conversation analysis has already found, in classrooms for example (McHoul, 1990), which is that negative or wrong answers are usually not undermined immediately; rather, they are ‘softened’ before a correction or a self-correction is produced. Additionally, it is possible that having in Rubén an ally who is willing to come back to the content could help the group undertake the task.

35. **Sofía:** it’s true... why?



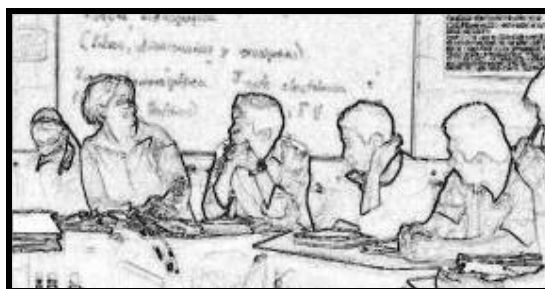
Sofía asks Rubén for a justification for his answer, so that both of them, and maybe other students as well, can arrive at the ‘right answer’.

Once Sofía re-establishes her position of pedagogic leadership, the idea behind her actions so far could be interpreted as (lines 13 to 28): ‘Juan, you can make jokes, but you have to adjust your answer to the structure of the exercise’. After this, she continues to wait for them to finish laughing (lines 29 and 30). At this point, she returns to the content of the lesson (lines 31-33): ‘and now let’s answer the question’. However, at this juncture it is possible that she cannot afford to lose their interest any longer. The alliance with Rubén helps Sofía and the students to move on (lines 34 to 39). The implied meaning could be expressed as: ‘well done, you are participating; but now justify your answer’. There are two aspects in the acceptance of Rubén’s response: Sofía not only accepts Rubén’s wrong answer, compromising with the truth, but she is also supporting Rubén’s willingness to come back to work, so that they work together to finish with the laughter ‘episode’. This is a common pedagogic ‘device’, as answering



in the context of schooling is not about guessing. Wrong answers are organised and managed by teachers (McHoul, 1990). Furthermore, answering a question in the school context is about thinking and justifying. In this sense, the curriculum guidelines in force at the time of this research state that among other purposes, pupils need to learn how to develop an argument, how to respond to ideas that challenge their own ideas, how to support their opinions, and how to develop their skills for discussing diverse subjects (SEP, 1993). Sofía and the class return to ‘the content’, and Sofía needs to lead to the correction of the wrong answer.

36. **Sofía:** why?



37. **Rubén:** because (inaudible) all the  
38. nights (inaudible) without  
39. sleeping as well...



At this point the laughter and enjoyment after the joke has nearly disappeared, and it is clear how these emotions are situated and tied to the situation. Previously, they emerged with a joke that is clear for Mexican students and their teacher (and the observer), but at this point, it is clear that the length of both laughter and enjoyment, as well as their ‘shape’ is regulated according to the practice in which students and teacher participate. Students can laugh and even hit on the table, but Sofía leads the duration and shape of this laughter through the lesson in relation to the pedagogic practices of the class. It is in this sense that we can say that emotions are *constituted* in social practices.

Sofía engages in a dialogue by offering Rubén the chance to defend his answer. He says what he remembers from Sofía's question: '[Don Quixote] spent the nights without sleeping' in order to read (lines 37 to 39). Sofía's original question has not been answered, so Sofía opens the question to the group (lines 40 and 41). Bruno and Andrés (Figure 7, below, shows these two students, as they do not appear in the view of the camera; this image is taken from line 11, *supra*) answer the question together.

40. **Sofía:** ... for reading books... but  
41. what kind of ...



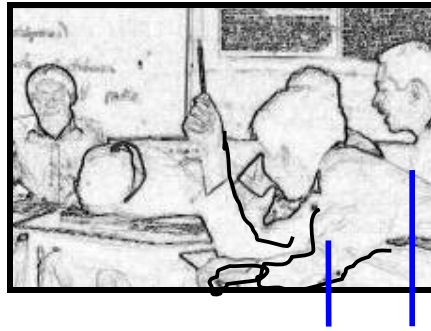
42. **Bruno and Andrés:** [books about  
43. knights...('caballeros')



44. **Sofía:** books?  
45. **Boy?:** ---- ... not cowboys

46. **Sofía:** ---- ... knight books... (she  
47. corrects 'caballería')...

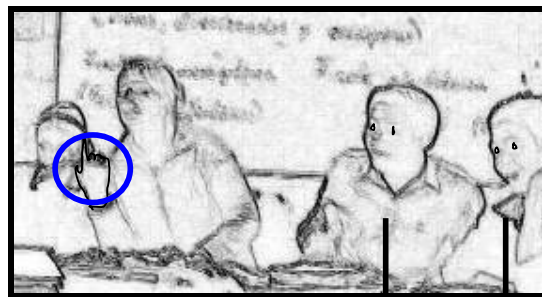




**Figure 7. Bruno and Andrés**

Sofía still corrects a subtle point that, in brief, could be summarised as something like: ‘they were not books about knights; they were knight books’. Then, Sofía raises her index finger again in order to address the whole class. She reminds them of her question as a means of concluding, and it could be interpreted as: ‘although I came up with this idea that he read fantasy books, actually Don Quixote used to read knight books’. She emphasises the word ‘fantasies’ by opening her hand, and this gesture can be interpreted in Mexico as a way of reducing importance (‘It is only what I said’). The gesture gives the verbal expression the sensation of looseness, which could be worded as: ‘It is a loose suggestion, isn’t it?’

48. **Sofía:** ...I said... books about



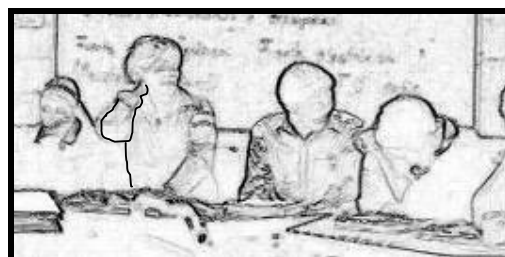
Rubén Javier

49. **Sofía:** ... *fantasies*...



Simultaneously, beginning at line 48, we can see the two students on Sofía's left, (Rubén and Javier) making jokes, laughing with Juan (almost in front of them) about the joke, teasing him. In fact, earlier in the class, they were laughing with Juan before his joke (during the previous questions, so it was prior to the beginning of this excerpt). At this point, Sofía's physical distancing from those two students, as she leans to her right, away from the boys coincides with her distancing from 'jokes' and moving towards 'seriousness' (lines 48 and 48); from 'laughing' to 'working'. She focuses on answering the question, while the two boys laugh again with Juan (lines 50 and 51).

50. **Sofía:** ... yes... no... no... what  
51. books (to the whole group)?



52. **Several students:** books about knights  
53. **Sofía:** ... books about knights... very  
54. good

55. **Sofía:** ... be smart (or ready,  
56. 'listos' has both  
57. meanings)... will you?



She repeats the questions to the whole group and we find the basic exchange pattern known as Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF) (Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Sinclair

and Coulthard, 1975), where the teacher initiates an exchange, the students respond, and this response is in turn followed by evaluative feedback from the teacher. This sequence is the closure used by Sofía in order to offer the correct answer to this true-false question about Don Quixote's readings. Several students answer, and she nods while repeating the answer, evaluating it: 'very good'. This 'pattern', in which they knew the answer because it was given in a previous turn (lines 46 and 47), might imply two aspects. First, it ensures that the 'right answer' is clear for everybody; second, and more importantly perhaps, it is restating the relations between student and tutor and is closing the current issue. With this pattern, Sofía seems to announce that the students are 'successful', but not so much in relation to the response to the question. They have successfully returned to work. Sofía finishes this segment of the class by inviting them to be smart (and ready). Then she invites them to move on to the following question.

Throughout this interchange, the girl on Sofía's right has hardly moved, except for a few seconds during which her smile could be seen and it was clear that she was laughing after the joke. Sofía does not pay attention to her. In fact, this segment of the class is dominated by the active participation of the boys, because only Sara shares the expression of laughter in a similar way to the boys, as I have indicated, hitting her table with both hands. The rest of the girls laugh discreetly and some of them cover their mouths. This seems an indication of gender issues involved in the way laughter and enjoyment is enacted by students.

Sofía shows empathy towards students' laughter and more generally towards their behaviour. She does not question their emotions verbally: she does not challenge them; on the contrary, she follows them and softly she brings them back into the task. We have seen in this excerpt how Sofía and her students laugh and enjoy a joke, but also, how Sofía works towards the regulation of the laughter and brings the class back to work. In the remainder of this chapter I will turn to the issue of context as a feature of the model being applied here to analyse emotions in the classroom. I move now to a discussion of the detailed data presented so far.

## **The concrete context of emotions**

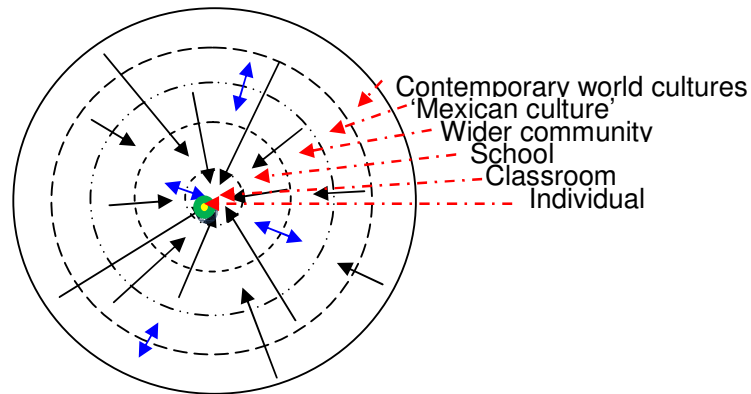
My aim now is to explore in detail the relationship between emotions and context. So far, I have shown how laughter happens, as enjoyment of a joke, as well as the accompaniment of emotions, within a social context. The excerpt presented in the

previous section has illustrated that emotions are a part of the social processes that take place in the classroom – e.g. that laughter occurs within the context of formal teaching and learning. In the same manner in which Goodwin (Goodwin, 2003b) has shown the situated character of vision, the emotions observed in the excerpt presented above are neither passions detached from the social world in which they emerge, nor do they constitute only part of an individual experience; on the contrary, emotions are bound to the task at hand, as much as to the social activity in which people engage. At the same time, emotions are bound to the other participants in the task and are experienced and visible within this particular social context. In this section, I discuss this grounding of emotions in the social context from a sociocultural stance. Below, I show that laughter happens in this case under particular circumstances of doing things together within the context defined by the particular practice in which people engage, where they have a purpose, and participate in relation to others.

### ***Context which surrounds***

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Cole (1996) identifies two main conceptions of context: context as *that which surrounds an event* (an action, an individual or a situation) and context as *that which weaves diverse ‘threads’ together*. The first characterisation, which follows Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological view of human development, considers context as the environment, and treats it as encircling the event under scrutiny, with concentric circles representing different contextual levels. The internal circles are ‘nested’ within the outer one, which shape, and in a way explain the inner ones. In this approach, each level depends on the support and the demands emanating from the next outer setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole and Cole, 2001). In a way, this seems like a Copernican approach to studying a phenomenon, in which the centre is defined according to the research focus, in this case, emotions.

Following this idea of context as a set of concentric circles, the drawing below (Figure 13) could illustrate this way of understanding context in relation to emotions. Individuals’ emotions develop in this case in the context of the classroom. This means that they do not ‘come into’ the context, but they emerge within, i.e. as part of it. That is in turn inserted in the context of the school, which is inserted in the context of the wider community, which is inserted in the context of the ‘Mexican culture’, which is inserted in the context of ‘contemporary world cultures’ (see Figure 13). The different contexts are permeable and end up impacting on each other and, finally, having an impact at the individual level.



**Figure 8. Context as Concentric circles**

In the excerpt, I pointed to the way in which laughing about jokes made by students while working could be acceptable in Mexican culture; we could see as well, that laughter is also limited by the leading of the teacher to return to the task, which constituted the implied main purpose of all of them in that particular context. For this reason, emotions seem to be affected by the fact that individuals (teacher/students) operate in a localised context (their Spanish classroom), in which certain behaviours are acceptable. For Sofía, the pragmatics (local context and aims) of the particular activity that she is leading are worked through in relation to the cultural practices of an institution (school) and broader culture(s) (Mexican secondary school community/Mexican culture).

For the students, the specific knowledge of a teacher's style and manner as part of the lived context of this classroom are part of how they configure and work through their actions, which, at the same time, are drawn from broader cultural contexts. In this way, the concentric cultures of broad and specific cultures interrelate with each other and have an impact on/are used by people in particular circumstances, and we can see the way in which they impact each other. In turn, Mexican culture links with the 'contemporary world culture' in which these schools (Delamont, 1976), or more precisely, Western schools (Rogoff, 2003) exist, mostly as a complex mosaic, but still, with an impact in the particular school and the emotions present in this classroom, etc.

In this expanded view, a greater picture of what is observed in the classroom constitutes a 'still image' of what Cole (1996) points to as the view of context in concentric circles. The view afforded by this model broadens significantly the most common understanding about emotions in psychology, which generally focuses on the individual.

With this approach, emotions are understood with regards to other ‘levels’ of explanation (those delineated in the concentric circles), and their presence in the school becomes more than just an individual affair, as in the perspectives that I discussed in the first part of Chapter 3. This understanding of the structure of the context offers an embedded and situated approach to emotions.

The double-headed arrows in the diagram (in blue in Figure 13, above), which are in between contiguous levels, capture the negotiations that take place between them. Cole (1996) says in this respect that, “without forgetting for a moment that the power relations among participants ‘at different levels of the context’ are often unequal, it is no less important when using the nested-context approach to take into account the fact that context creation is an actively achieved, two sided process” (1996, p. 134). For example, the individual expression of emotions has an impact on the classroom context. When Felipe laughs and hits the table, Joaquin and Sarah also laugh with large movements; the entire group is laughing noisily and this changes the pace of the work and the task in which the group is engaged. This approach offers an understanding of “the synchronic constraints on action” (Cole, 1996, p. 335) within a particular situation.

In spite of the wider picture that this model offers, it is also problematic. First of all, the questions of which layers should be diagrammed and which layers should be nested into those is unclear. This seems to be quite arbitrarily built: it could be seen spatially (or geographically), but also hierarchically. Should I have started by nesting the Mexican school system? Are the layers ‘equidistant’ from each other? Should the model include community issues (such as the local community which the school serves) as part of the diagram, for example? While the localisation and ‘borders’ of the classroom seem somehow ‘obvious’, for some of the circles there is room to ask what would be the criteria for drawing outlines between one concentric circle and the next one? In the transcription of the micro-situation presented above, issues related to Mexican popular culture which become a joke, gendered laughter, the role of the teacher, the questioning of the situation by adolescent students, and many other elements come together in the classroom, making the concentric circles a relatively arbitrary conceptual tool.

There is a difficulty in sustaining a hierarchical impact from the outer context towards the inner levels. Also the penetration of the impact through the diverse layers is a complex process of interpretation and transformation, and for this reason it is difficult to define the kind of impact that the outer levels have in local contexts. I tried to represent this with the arrows that penetrate through the diverse levels. Schooling, for example,



becomes a particular case of school when it passes through the ‘Mexican culture’ circle (with all its complexities considering the bricolage that ‘culture’ is), where several transformations take place. In this case, the way in which emotions occur inside the classroom is permeated in that ‘Mexican culture’.

Additionally, although this model can contribute to the psychology of emotions, there is no clarity in this model (in the same way that it is not clear in the sociology of emotions), concerning the way in which the social and the individual aspects of emotions play together and co-construct each other. Individual emotions are part of the social context, and shaped by it defining how to laugh, when to laugh, for how long, etc. The students enact these aspects of the shaping of their laughter: they hit the table or cover their mouths, and they stop laughing after Sofía’s insistence on calming down. On the other hand, emotions have something that seems to go beyond the social control: an outburst of cackles which is also enacted both individually and socially. What is socially acceptable is the result of a socially situated negotiation: you can laugh in this classroom, but not for long. It is possible that in other classrooms laughter is not accepted as such, but in this one, students can laugh.

### ***Context as that which weaves together***

The second conception of context pointed to by Cole (1996), was context as that which weaves together, and it offers additional insights about emotions in context. In this view of context, we could think about context as analogous to a ‘fabric’ (like a piece of fabric), but more than just thinking about the ‘tissue’ we should think about a ‘weaver’ (because it is a tissue that is being produced). In this understanding of the context a particular situation is defined by the multiple ‘threads’ that are becoming part of it. This metaphor helps bring together the different contexts organised in concentric circles above. The joke in Sofía’s class makes sense in a context where the curricular content can be compared with an aspect of Mexican popular culture (the Cowboy Books comics). The diverse threads do not have a logical separation that give them sense before the joke. Also, the consequences of the joke involve those threads coming together in this classroom, i.e. the laughter, the empathy towards the laughter, the need of ‘calming down’ the students, etc.

The context is woven together in the present time, in an enacted manner. As Cole synthesizes in relation to this perspective of the context, “objects and context arise together” (1996, p. 136). Sofía’s laughter and the students’ laughter are a part of the context in which it occurs and where laughter becomes alive and meaningful, and it also

constructs the particular context of this lesson. De-contextualising laughter abstracts and splits it from the social element of laughter, and means that we miss the fact that both the purposes and the 'environment' are built together as a part of the practice of teaching and learning in this case. It is actually the fact that laughter takes place in a classroom that shapes laughter. Nevertheless, context is produced and so it changes with the actions of those participating in the social practices. Individuals externalise laughter, and so they try it as part of their participation in the practice. For this reason, laughter as communication is subsumed to the social practice of teaching and learning in a classroom.

The meaning of the emotions is constructed via 'doing things together'. She understood the joke and laughed. This is not trivial because, faced with a joke - which, of course, she might not have understood - she could have felt angry about the students' off-topic comment, particularly as it occurred in front of the camera. Therefore, the joke is also part of the relation between Sofía and the students: it is part of the establishment of rapport or collegiality, of achieving a certain kind of atmosphere or climate (relaxed, informal, supportive perhaps). In this sense, her laughter also had a meaning for the students as the acceptance of the joke by their teacher, and so this has an impact on the nature of her relation with them, and vice versa. But the rapport and acceptance of the students is linked in the last instance to the purpose of her practice, which is teaching.

Pedagogically, Sofía's laughter has an immediate consequence because she can then start to build a more powerful or assertive or perhaps respectful and respected position in order to return to the goal of the task in which all of them, Sofía and the students, are participating. The joke was accepted and 'reoriented' towards the task by Sofía. We can see then that 'working together in the world' has a particular shape in this case.

I have shown that when analysing emotions in contexts, it is clear that in the data presented we can wonder where laughter starts and where it ends. Does it start in the joke - the naughty character of the mention of the 'Cowboy books' in class? Does it start in the setting of the class? Although we did not have access to any internal organ, we can presume that they occur as much in the brain as they do in the body movements. However, to what extent are their development and duration linked to the accompaniment of classmates' or the teacher's reactions and movements? Where do emotions end: in the invitation from the teacher to calm down, in the lack of success of the new jokes, or in the rules of the school, which in turn can affect the teacher's and students' behaviours? Emotions and context do not have such a neat separation as the

foot and its footprint on the sand. Emotions cross the social situation and the body simultaneously. In the case of emotions – and in the same manner as in the case of cognition (Cole, 1996) – a sociocultural approach may offer us closer clues to the understanding of their role in everyday life.

There is a difficulty in disambiguating emotions from context, because as soon as we could clear define where an emotion begins: laughter or pleasure through laughter, leaving aside the contexts in which it happens, there are important threads missing. These are the threads by which the sense is attributed to the laughter by those that laugh, as much as the social consequences of the laughter. In the same manner that Goodwin shows that pointing is part of an “action package” that takes place in situations in which participants “are building with each other the actions that define and shape their life world” (Goodwin, 2003a, p. 29), but not only in terms of the communication with each other, but also in relation to the objective of the activities in which they participate. Analysing laughter in this case helps in understanding how emotions as ‘bodily reactions’ are socially organised and structured by the social organisation in which they emerge. Also, we can see how laughter is actually an important element that arises in this context and that helps the class to continue working. It is a useful ‘interruption’ in that sense.

More generally, focusing the analysis in the social realm helps us not only to understand the social aspects of the laughter, but also, eventually, the way in which the individual properties of laughter take place as part of the participation of individuals in social practices. Even the study of individual emotions with these lenses could definitely offer a different light to the understanding of the functions of laughter for individuals. Laughter and emotions thus provide a place to investigate the range of aspects that human beings use when participating in social practices that are endogenous to the social world. What seems clear is that we cannot cut biology from the social situation as everything biological is closely intertwined in it.

This suggests a map of some of the elements that could be studied further: the way in which emotions are conceptualised and understood as worked through and described or discussed by the participants, the way in which emotions emerge and have an impact in the body, and the way in which awareness of the joke and body movements work together, exchanging their roles as cause or consequence (Vygotsky, 1993), when later the teacher gently and patiently invites the students to stop laughing, and they finally stop. Then, a number of questions emerge. How can we talk about emotions in a way

that draws out their contextually situated character? How can we talk about and study laughter? Could we talk about laughter as pleasure? Could it be that laughter is linked to pleasure, but also to other emotions such as the teacher's embarrassment (at being observed), or the teacher's empathy, for example when the teacher laughs about the joke or students make bigger movements after observing their classmates' movements? My aim is not so ambitious as to involve specifying a new language for dealing with emotions, but only to discuss the strengths and limitations of both the theoretical sociocultural approach built on Vygotsky's ideas and my conceptual foci for dealing with the data analysis.

### **Emotions in context**

At this point, I can address the questions posed in Chapter 5 in relation to context. If we study emotions in context, then it is clear that there is neither a clear-cut separation between emotions in individuals and in the social situation, nor we can neatly separate emotions from their 'situational' space and time. In addition, it is important to identify the impact of emotions in the transformation of context,

#### ***Emotions: identification and disambiguation***

In this section, I address the question: Can emotions, as the affect involved in participation in social practices, be identified and disambiguated from the setting?

The microsituation presented above shows that it is possible to identify emotions, but it is not possible to fully disambiguate them. Laughter associated with pleasure, laughter as an empathetic response among students, and between teacher and students, and the teacher's embarrassment were identified in the context in which they emerge. Emotions, or at least some of them, could be identified through careful observation and analysis of video-recorded episodes. It was possible to point to them, recognise and name them as part of the context, and interpret some of the ways in which teacher and students make sense of them. Emotions then can be seen as part of the social context as much as of the individuals' actions.

Nevertheless, the data also suggest that it is difficult to delimit the contour of emotions, because they are present in body movements, i.e. in behaviour, but the sense of those behaviours is built in the context in which they take place, in the way in which a gaze, an quick movement of the hands or a smile is interpreted as part of the wholeness of the situation. It is unclear when and where emotions start and end, to what extent they are

either the effect, or the cause in the construction of the context in which they emerge. Thus, emotions (and their body functioning) cannot be isolated from the social situation. As a result, emotions are difficult to disambiguate because if they are torn apart from their context we would miss what gives them their vitality.

Emotions are not only the actions performed (the laughter of the students, the striking of the table by some of them, Sofía's empathetic movements and speech or her quieter laughter), or a response to the stimulus that contributes to triggering them (a joke, a funny and naughty situation for Mexican students, the intention to be empathetic, students' laughter, 'imitation' of peers, attempts at additional jokes, etc.). Emotions, laughter and the enjoyment that follows a joke, are shaped and regulated according to the fact that they take place in a classroom. Emotions are enacted in the situation and their sense constitutes a process in which their individual and social aspects co-construct each other.

### ***The impact of emotions***

The second question posed in Chapter 5 to investigate emotions and context is: When emotions are analysed in the context in which they emerge, is it possible to identify if they have an impact on the transformation of both the relations among participants and the world (the material reality, the practice, the objective of the activity)?

Laughter and empathy show that emotions create or reinforce the bonds among the students and between the teacher and the students in Sofia's classroom. Furthermore, the harmonious working environment and students' engagement with the task, suggests that emotions do not only have an impact on the relationships among students and between teacher and students, but they also have an impact in relation to the aim of the task and eventually to the objective of the activity. On the one hand, the way in which Sofia and her students get along is transformed by the emotions that emerge in the classroom. Laughter contributes to the creation of a pleasant atmosphere or climate in which they work together.

As I pointed out above, laughter in this case becomes an element that supports the group's continued engagement in the work of the classroom. It is like a temporary diversion on a bus journey: it might make the journey enjoyable, but the bus eventually returns to the route. The emergence of laughter contributes to pursuing the aim of the task, which is to answer the question. More broadly, it contributes to students' learning about Don Quixote and to reflect about the issues involved in the classic novel.

Eventually, in the last instance, it supports the pursuit of the object of the activity, which is students' learning in general. Thus, emotions, pleasurable laughter in this case, makes a contribution to the way in which teacher and students work together in the world, both engaging in pursuing the objective of the activity and in building relations among them: what to do and how, when and where to do it, who with, etc.

In summary, it is feasible to identify emotions that emerge in the classroom (at least some of them). However, it is difficult to fully disambiguate them from context because the trigger of emotions (a joke, other people's laughter or actions, or the presence of the camera), their emergence (as a smile or as a cackle), development (increase or reduction, for example), their disappearance and their consequences are grounded in the situation.

That individuals are always participating in the social world is an inescapable truism that has often been overlooked. From a sociocultural perspective, the recognition of the role played by experiences of individuals, and the way in which an impact on emotions and intentions is built by individuals; in turn all of them (previous experiences, emotions and intentions) also have an impact in the social world. The experience of being part of a particular classroom context is different for Juan, who makes a joke, than for Sara, who laughs at Juan's joke; the experience is also different for Juan and Sara, whose laughter is somehow accepted by Sofía, as part of the class, than for other classes that I will discuss in the chapters to come. Individuals are not isolated atoms that come together to conform the social world. Individuals are part and parcel of the social world, but their experiences of the social are diverse and play an important role in their participation. Individuals and their role in co-constructing the social world are an issue for psychology, but they hold little interest, fairly enough, for sociology.

To finalise this chapter, I would like to underline an issue: Once the embeddedness of emotions in the situation is recognised, a question that emerges is whether there is something additional in a sociocultural approach in relation to what a sociology of emotions has stated. If we work out our emotions towards the institution and more generally towards the social world, what would be the difference between an approach founded in the social construction of emotions and a sociocultural one? The analysis of the data presented in this chapter suggests that a sociocultural approach allows the acknowledgement not only of the social character of individual experience, but of the importance of the diversity of experiences that the social world represents for individuals. In this sense, there is a co-construction of the individual and the social

characteristics of emotions, and the diversity of experiences acknowledges a relative independence of individuals and the way in which individual and social aspects of emotions are co-constructed. I return to this issue in Chapter 10.

## **Wrapping up**

With the intention to find the answer to the question *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?*, in this chapter I presented a first excerpt of data. I have also addressed specific questions about emotions. The conclusion in this regard was that emotions are part and parcel of the context in which they emerge.

I have argued that there is neither a clear-cut separation between emotions in individuals and the social situation in which they participate, nor can emotions be neatly separated from their context. Emotions do not happen ‘on top’ or as an element independent of the context; on the contrary, emotions emerge as part of the ongoing situation, as part of a social practice, which in this case is teaching in the classroom. For this reason, emotions are part of contexts. This needs to be at the basis of a sociocultural approach to study emotions in general, and emotions in the classroom in particular.

## **Chapter 7 – Pay attention: Emotions in Practice**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this second analysis chapter is to offer other lenses to the question *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* The chapter comprises two sections: (1) a second microsituation via an excerpt and (2) an analysis and discussion about the study of emotions in practice. The analysis undertaken in the latter section considers the two microsituations presented so far (in Chapter 6 and the new micro-situation presented in this chapter) as I am using the data cumulatively as indicated in the methodology.

Through the analysis of pedagogic practice, in the second part of this chapter, I address the questions posed in Chapter 5 in relation to practice. First, I discuss the meaning of the idea of embodiment in practice; then, I discuss the three functions of emotions in social action that I identified, and I discuss the role of emotions in the continuity and rupture of the situated history of the microsituation.

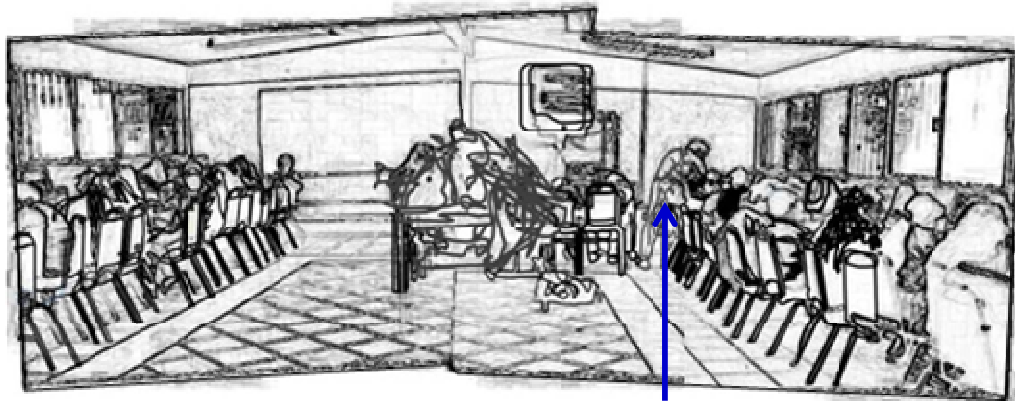
### **Paying attention in the media classroom**

I now examine a 40-second excerpt in which Ricardo, a teacher working with a first year group gets angry with a student whose screen is not where it was supposed to be. I am handling the camera, which is supported on a tripod. Ricardo is teaching the subject of giving presentations (how to present a subject in front of an audience), which was part of the first year secondary national curriculum at the time. This subject included the following sub-themes:

- The importance of using a script or scheme for doing presentations in front of an audience
  - Improvisation of oral presentations without a script
  - Analysis of these presentations to underline the advantages of the script and the notes
- Presentation of a text, based on a synthesis
- Individual practice of presentations supported by scripts.
- Use of graphic resources as a support
- Techniques for answering questions from the audience



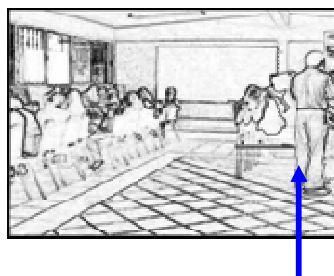
A circular situation begins to take place: Ricardo is using a PowerPoint presentation about the use of this program for supporting presentations. The group is already in the media classroom. The computers are facing the centre of the classroom, and the students are facing the computers with their backs to the teacher who is speaking.



**Figure 9. Ricardo and his group in the media classroom**

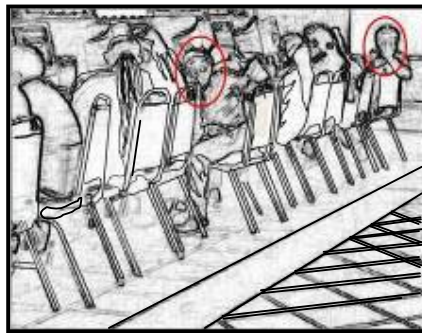
### *Let's see*

This is the first day in the media classroom. Ricardo had told the students where to sit. They were seated in pairs. The situation had moved from being quite chaotic at the beginning, to a calm situation. It is possible that the apparent chaos took place due to the fact that some students were still arriving and not yet seated, and possibly, also, because they were excited about being in the media classroom for the first time. At this stage (Figure 8) Ricardo is talking to the whole group. Between these two states- chaos and calm - Javier, the media teacher, led the class for several minutes. In this way, the class began with Javier providing a long talk defining the rules of behaviour in the media classroom. After this, Ricardo asked the students to initiate a PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Preparation of material with a computer'. Both Ricardo and Javier helped the students start the presentation on their screens. When everybody had the first slide of the presentation on their computer screens, Ricardo came to the centre of the classroom. The excerpt starts at this point.





1. **Ricardo:** ... let's see... pay attention... I am going to give an extra instruction to--
2. everyone... if I see a person playing and not listening to the instructions...



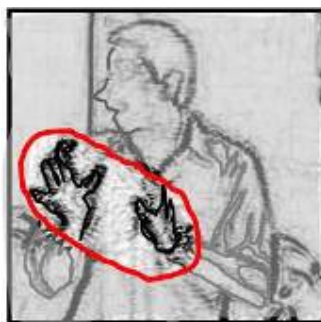
**Figure 10. Two students facing Ricardo**

Ricardo turns his full body first to his left, and then to his right in order to address the whole group, which is spread out around the classroom (lines 1 and 2). The group is divided by a pile of bags placed on tables in the centre. He stands close to this pile. The tables at the centre of the classroom are supposed to be used for team work or as a space where students can discuss or use other materials, such as magazines or books, while they are in the media classroom. However, in spite of the original planned intention, for health and safety reasons, the students' bags have to be left on top of those tables. At this point, the camera shows the left half of the classroom. Most of the students are facing their computers, or talking quietly to each other, with the exception of a couple of them as we can see in Figure 9 above.

The organisation of the classroom is in a "u" and this has been a decision originated in Sec21 Project Coordination (see Chapter 4). The intention of this distribution of the computers aims to support collaborative work among peers, to offer the teacher an easy access to students' work in order to facilitate information, questions, suggestions, etc.,

and to allow the teacher greater ‘control’ over what the students do on their computers. However, in addition to the big pile of bags that lies in the centre of the classroom, the disposition of the furniture creates interactional difficulties as the teacher cannot see the students’ faces when he addresses the whole group.

At the beginning of the class, during which Javier explained the rules of the media classroom, all the students had to turn their chairs towards the centre. At this point, however, Ricardo is giving instructions to the students while they are facing the computers. While talking to the students (lines 1 and 2), Ricardo moves his hands up and down with increasing speed (Figure 10). This movement could be a sign of some nervousness caused by the fact that his class is being observed, particularly on the first day that he has brought this group to the media classroom.

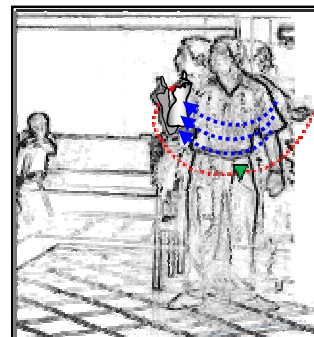


**Figure 11. Ricardo giving instructions**

### *Warning the students*

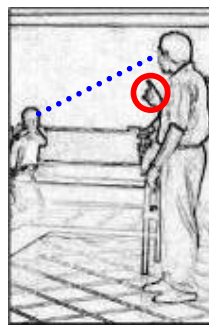
Ricardo continues talking to the students, but now he raises his right index finger. This gesture could be read as a warning, which is what he is implying, in fact. This is the same gesture Sofía used at some point in her class, as we saw in the previous chapter. Simultaneously, with the change in his hands, Ricardo still continues to turn from side to side in order to address the whole group.

3. **Ricardo:** ... the first thing I will do is to ask
4. him to stand up (“pararlo”) as their
5. intention to work with the group is
6. not evident ...



While Ricardo turns around (blue arrows in lines 3 to 6), he moves his index finger in an independent way, following the trajectory drawn by the red arrow. Just after mentioning the word ‘pararlo’ (‘stand up’, line 4), his arm arrives at its full extension, at the point signalled by a green triangle. This extension of the arm is a movement used to indicate ‘get out’ and is a common gesture in the school, adopted to point to the ‘corner’ where a student has to stand as a sanction for misbehaving, or to point to the door when a student is to be sent out of the classroom. Ricardo makes this gesture very mildly on this occasion, because he points lightly down towards the floor.

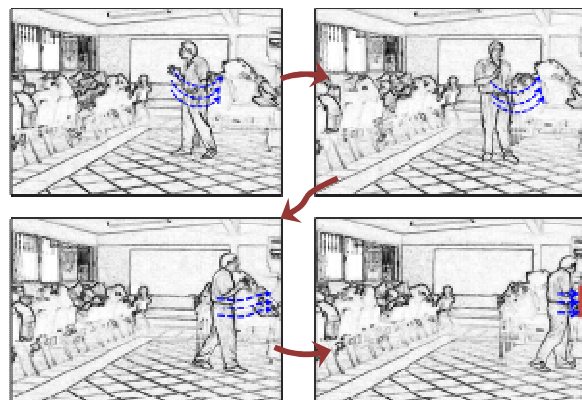
Ricardo finishes the turn to his right with his index finger up while looking very briefly at the last boy on that side (Figure 11, below). It is possible that he looks at other students who are looking at him, but this is not easy to capture from this angle of the camera. Also, as it was mentioned before, not many students are looking at him.



**Figure 12. Ricardo looking at a boy**

Then Ricardo opens his right hand, and speaking very slowly, concludes the sentence while turning again towards the right side of the classroom from the view point of the camera.

7. **Ricardo:** ... and it will be the  
8. last time that this  
9. person comes to the  
10. media classroom ...



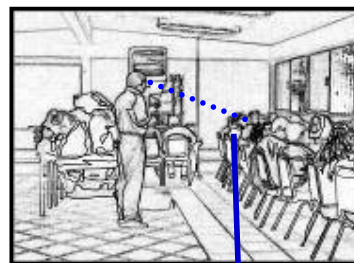
Ricardo looks at the camera when he says the word ‘comes’ (line 9). This short glance shows his awareness and possible worry about the presence of the camera.

All these movements that Ricardo makes around the classroom seem very measured, and unemotional; perhaps they are routinely used to warn the students. However, this shows the difficulty of the communication associated with the organisation of physical space. Although Ricardo’s turning from one side to the other several times in a short period (only 19 seconds have passed) might be associated to the observation and the camera, it can also be related to the discomfort of this physical layout. Similar kinds of warnings, however, were also observed in different lessons that Ricardo had with this group, in which he recurrently warned students about their behaviour. Thus they might be indicative of his particular pedagogic approach.

### ***Discovering misbehaviour***

Ricardo stops walking after finishing line 11 (when he arrives at the red line in the lower right image above, associated with this line of the transcription). I follow him with the camera. Now the right side of the classroom can be seen through the camera. When he stops, Teresa quickly turns to look at him, which possibly attracts Ricardo’s attention. He realises that Teresa’s computer is not on the screen it should be. We see here one of the possible affordances of the “U” distribution of the chairs in the media classroom, as Ricardo could see what Teresa was doing.

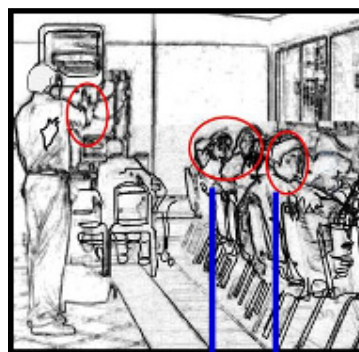
11. **Ricardo:** ... because their interest is not seen...



Teresa

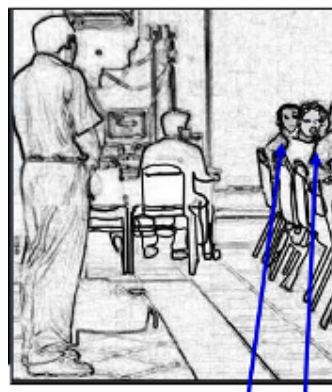
Then Ricardo addresses Teresa directly. He points at her with his whole arm (line 12 and 13); immediately after, he puts his hands together in front of his body (line 14).

12. **Ricardo:** ... why are you moving Teresa?  
 13. ... did I tell you that you moved already?



Teresa César

14. **Teresa:** ... (inaudible)

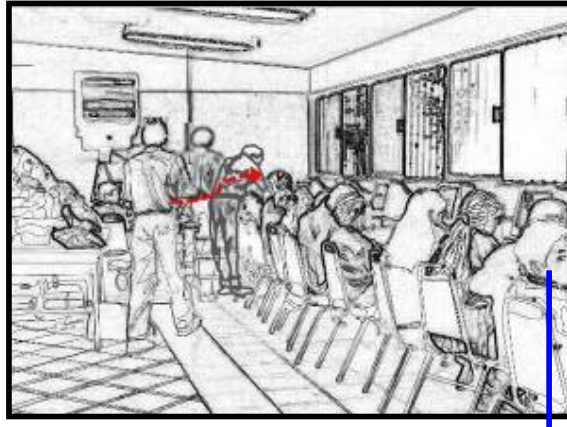


Raymundo Teresa

Teresa and the two students on either side (Raymundo on her left and a girl on her right) turn to look at Ricardo. César also turns to the camera. The student behind Teresa turns to see her computer.

While Teresa speaks (line 14), a boy says something inaudible as well, which sounds as if he is making fun of the situation, but it is not clear if it is about Teresa or the teacher's reprimand. A girl and a boy to the right of Teresa turn to look at her screen. Ricardo remains standing in the same place and asks Teresa a question (line 15). Then he walks towards Teresa (lines 16 to 19). Marcos looks at the camera, making evident that he is aware of the recording.

15. **Ricardo:** ... did not you listen to what I said?  
16. **Teresa:** It is because I –inaudible--”)... you had put it...  
17. **Ricardo:** -- I had already... I had already put your computers in that place...  
18. **Ricardo:** ... I do not know why...  
19. **Teresa:** --- it is because –inaudible--



Marcos

20. **Ricardo:** --- I do not know why... you do not have (inaudible)

Ricardo arrives where Teresa is and interrupts her explanation (line 20). Most of the students stay quiet and continue to face the front. Presumably they look at their computers.

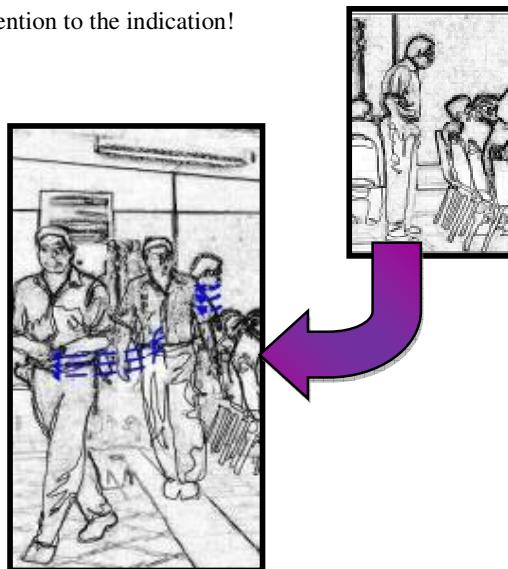
Ricardo stands behind Teresa's chair and with his right hand uses the mouse to find the slide of the presentation that Teresa should have had displayed. Ricardo then steps back and shouts at Teresa (line 21). He then starts walking towards the centre of the classroom.

During this time (starting at line 12) Ricardo has been scolding Teresa, interrupting her explanations and putting the presentation in the right place. He sounds annoyed and he is raising his voice. His anger seems to be building up, as we will see below.



*Teresa, pay attention*

21. **Ricardo:** ... Teresa, pay attention to the indication!



22. **Ricardo:** ... well... now...

Ricardo sounds very angry in line 21, and he takes a very small step back while talking. According to my field notes, Teresa makes a comment that the boy to her left had moved her screen from the correct place, although this cannot be distinguished in the video recording. Ricardo does not shout, but the energy of his voice changes at this point. From the beginning of this excerpt he has been warning the students of the consequences of misbehaving in the media classroom with a calm voice and at times very slowly (as if he were thinking over each of his words). By contrast, at this point he speaks quickly and more loudly, while he steps back. This paradoxical combination of voice and movement is an indication of a tension: he is angry and he is restraining himself from expressing his anger more widely (line 21).

In this situation, Teresa (in lines 16 to 21) looks slightly nervous. I infer this from Teresa's neck movement while she talks and while she looks at her screen. Additionally, when Ricardo finishes speaking (line 21) and walks away from Teresa, both a girl and a boy look down at their own hands, which might be interpreted as a way of presenting themselves as being disengaged from what is happening, and possibly as a strategy for not catching the teacher's attention. In terms of emotions, this might be associated with fear of being told off by the teacher.

When Ricardo moves away from Teresa, she says something to Raymundo, the boy next to her (he appears in line 14), which is not heard in the recording. At this point, she has stopped the movement of her neck, and she holds her head with her right hand,



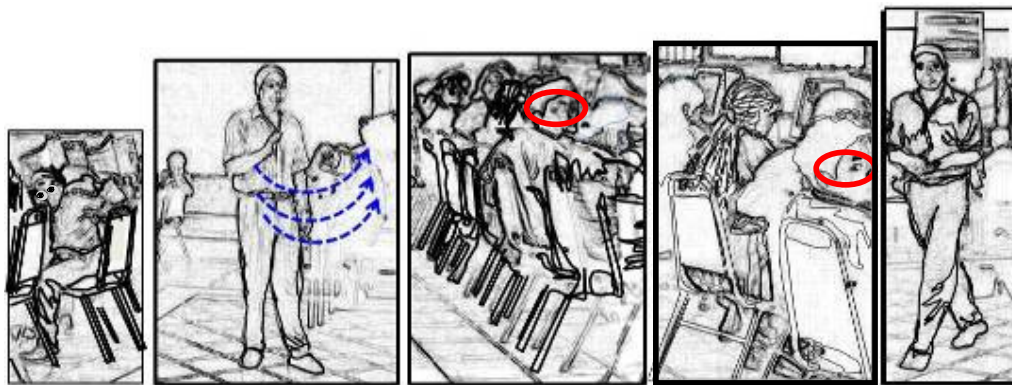
supporting her elbow on the table. She looks upset and seems frustrated. The class continues. Ricardo looks at the camera and walks confidently back to the centre of the classroom.

### ***Anger in the classroom***

Ricardo's annoyance or anger seems to be related to the need to control the group for the students to work as Ricardo had planned, particularly in the first lesson in the media classroom, which is also being observed and video-recorded. The way in which the students act in the face of Ricardo's reprimand towards Teresa is with a cautious behaviour that can be interpreted as fear. In terms of the group, there were a lot of tensions in the classroom: sometimes the relations between Ricardo and the class were amiable, but very often they reached a point in which Ricardo was angry and where he and some of the students have confrontations. Interestingly, the most common reaction from the students was laughter, maybe as an expression of nervousness or as a challenging reaction in the face of his annoyance.

In the following classes observed, Teresa was constantly challenging Ricardo. On several occasions she confronted him by answering in an impolite manner. Since this was the first observation with this group, it is possible that a pattern of confrontation between Teresa and Ricardo had previously been established or that this was the way in which it was established. Teresa may well have felt treated unfairly.

Observing this interaction, I felt embarrassed. I did not like being there. Also there is a great awareness of the presence of the camera, and of my presence in the classroom. There are several moments in which Ricardo and the students looked at the camera (Figure 12, below). Observing when someone is scolded might have produced shame both in the observer and in the people observed. By contrast with Sofía, both power issues and confrontation emerge in Ricardo's classroom. In relationship to this, first one student and then another (Teresa or Raymundo) dares to challenge Ricardo; as a result, he displays his anger for some seconds, although in a very controlled way.



**Figure 13. Looking at the camera**

Furthermore, anger is an emotion that Ricardo did not plan. He could have planned to be strong or hard on the students, as he was talking with seriousness from the beginning of the excerpt. Anger seems to ‘emerge’ in an unplanned manner from the situation. It appears in this case as the way in which Ricardo engages with an emergent interactional issue (that is, negotiating the moving back of Teresa’s screen to the proper start place). However, this engagement happens as part of the social practice of teaching in a secondary school. Not only is the content of the anger culturally situated as part of this practice, but Ricardo gets angry possibly in order to face the challenge linked to the fulfilment of what he might be expecting to take place in his classroom. He was warning the students to behave appropriately in the context of this new space for them, and we can see that he was worried that they misbehaved.

Also, Ricardo may not have expected that- even before starting the first activity in the classroom - a student (Teresa) would breach the rule he was trying to establish. Ricardo seems to have interpreted Teresa’s behaviour as a challenge to his authority as her teacher. Also, the challenge came just as he was warning the students, and he acted in consequence to his previous comment that could be summarised as: ‘You will be in trouble if you misbehave’. Moreover, the form of the anger is also culturally informed. Ricardo is clearly angry, but how he deals with his anger conforms to the context. It appears simultaneously expressed and restrained.

Ricardo’s anger in the present situation is, in fact, grounded in the context at the present time. Simultaneously, however, Ricardo’s anger is used to push for the goal of the task at hand, which is to discuss the material that should be displayed on the screens of all the students’ computers. Ricardo’s glance towards the camera in the last seconds seems

to imply, ‘mission accomplished’, and this suggests that he probably perceives his anger as useful. In this way, anger is not only a result, but also a resource that can be focussed in a way that is functional to the actions that are supposed to take place in the classroom (teaching and learning tasks). In this case, Ricardo uses his anger to ‘keep on going’ with the task as framed and intended by him. Anger seemed to be useful, in some sort of way, for Ricardo to deal with the issues he faced in the classroom.

### ***Fear and anger***

Fear and anger emerge, develop, and vanish in the excerpt presented above. Regarding the former, Ricardo seems angry when he discovers that Teresa’s screen was not on the correct slide of the PowerPoint presentation; Teresa also shows some annoyance or anger after being reprimanded by Ricardo. In relation to fear, some students stay still or look at their hands when Ricardo gets angry. Additionally, it is possible that Ricardo’s warning about appropriate student behaviour and his annoyance with Teresa were also the result of a worry or fear of not being able to control the group.

Ricardo’s behaviour in relation to his anger with Teresa involves an organisation of his body: stepping back in coincidence with his quick and loud reprimand. He regulates or modulates his anger and with that he externalises what I described above as a paradoxical pattern: ‘step back while shouting’. A second aspect, which can be inferred, is that his behaviour is also being built in his body in a process in which the externalisation of behaviour and the internalisation of action work together. In this short excerpt, we can observe its enactment and infer the consequences, although we cannot know the history of the development of such a pattern. In the same line, students’ enactment of contained fear when they look at their hands feeds the social situation, showing Ricardo and their peers that they do not want to be in trouble. Simultaneously, it has an effect of containing their fear in a social situation in which they might feel vulnerable.

### **Emotions: embodiment and functions**

In this section, I discuss how the analysis of emotions in practice contributes to addressing the question that gives sense to this research *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* through the response to the questions posed for *practice*, the second focus defined in Chapter 5.

### ***Embodiment in practice***

The first question in relation to practice is: How are emotions embodied in the social practices that take place in classrooms?

In relation to the body, emotions are present through actions, so body and actions are not separated. Ricardo expresses his anger to Teresa with his words, but also with his tone of voice and his movements. In the same line, students who are worried about the situation when Ricardo is angry look at their hands while he reprimands Teresa. Expressions and movements are actively performed, and their enactment becomes an ‘externalisation’ (Engestrom, 1987). This ‘externalisation’ has implications for what takes place, and it is actively being transformed in the setting of the classroom and in the interactions among participants.

Ricardo’s anger and students’ fear are part of the situation through words, tone of voice, and movements, in an active way which involves the body, a literal embodiment of emotions in the body. This is a reason for studies that focus on facial and bodily expression of emotions (Ekman and Oster, 1979; Ekman and Rosenberg, 2005; Tsai *et al.*, 2002). A similar situation can be observed in Sofía’s class, where noisy laughter and big movements are associated with the enjoyment of the joke. However, body movements are intertwined with the sense that participants in the practice make of the situation.

Simultaneously to the embodiment in the body, the actions become active ways to *make sense* of the situation. Making sense implies understandings and know-how, but making sense is not separated from body and actions. Actions become ‘interpretations’, constructed within the context of the practice, in which the differential roles of teacher and students impact on the way in which emotions can be presented (or not). Ricardo’s anger is practically understood by Teresa, when she stops her protests, and by other students, when they look at their own hands and stay still.

In the same line, in Sofía’s class, the noisy laughter shows students’ enjoyment of the joke. Also, her measured laughter, her words and her movements to calm the students down are also simultaneously bodily performed and contributing to the sense built by the class about stopping the laughter. Finally, it is important to point to the fact that some of the behaviours observed in both situations can be presumed to happen at a level that does not come to the participants’ awareness, for example when Sofía moves her arm downwards, or when Ricardo steps back. These behaviours would be at the level of operations (Leontyev, 1974),

I argue that such an embodiment in practice, is simultaneously both meaningful, in terms of the sense that participants make of the situation within the context of the practice, and physical, in terms of individuals' externalization of their emotions through behaviours. This seems to happen in a complex way, because it involves not only words, but also actions (presumably intentional) and operations (for which even awareness cannot be presumed) (Leontyev, 1974).

In the data that I have presented here, we can see that body and sense are intertwined in actions, even in those that involve language, in coincidence with Schatzki's suggestion:

bodies and activities are 'constituted' within practices... practices are the chief and immediate context within which the preponderance of bodily properties crucial to social life are formed, not just skills and activities but bodily experiences, surface presentations, and even physical structures as well (2001, p. 2).

In a few words, embodiment of emotions means embodiment in the body of individuals, but concretely in their behaviours, when they participate in the practice and interact among them.

Life experiences and participation in practices

Can different 'life experiences' be identified for diverse participants in a practice?

Students' life experiences can be identified as diverse among them in the two microsituations presented so far. In Ricardo's class, fear is observed when some of the students look at their hands. However, Teresa, also in the class shows anger or annoyance with Ricardo's reprimand addressed to her. In Sofia's class, boys and girls laugh in a very different way. Differences in the experience have to do with cultures associated with gender, social class, family culture, etc.; they also have to do with the specific position from which an individual participates in what can be called participants' present time. As a consequence, the same situation contributes to creating a diversity of experiences among students. More generally, being part of Ricardo's class and of Sofia's class constitutes a different experience in terms of the contrasting environments or climates led by the teachers, but created as a result of the relations established and being transformed by teachers and students.

On the other hand, teaching is not the same task in Sophia's and Ricardo's classes. Their life experience in the microsituations can be inferred to be considerably different. In the episodes presented, Sophia laughs and establishes alliances with her students; Ricardo gets angry with the students, and challenges them repeatedly. Teachers' previous experiences, together with their ongoing participation in current experiences

constitutes a source of diversity. All in all, emotions play an important part in life experience, and the construction of sense of the situation, as Vygotsky (1994) pointed out.

### ***Functions of emotions***

The third question in relation to practice is: What are the functions of emotions?

I inferred that emotions are linked to three types of issues or aspects of the situation: relations among participants, relations with artefacts and circumstances in the setting, and relations to the goals of the tasks and to the object (objective) of the activity. Also emotions are linked to the continuity or rupture of situations.

What I call functions, does not imply in itself intentionality. I use the word ‘function’ to summarise the diverse ways in which emotions are entangled with social actions, i.e. the ways in which emotions are part of teachers’ practices. To do so, I first underline some elements presented in the two excerpts so far and then I summarise a response to the issue of ‘functions’.

#### ***– Emotions and the relations among participants***

Emotions are at the centre of the relations among participants in the classroom. Sofía and her students follow Juan’s joke with laughter. Then, Sofía accompanies them with laughter and big movements, and afterwards, gently pushes them to return to the task. By contrast Ricardo warns his students against bad behaviour and a student behaves badly, so he gets angry, telling Teresa off. As a result, she complains about Ricardo’s actions, and students remain still, looking at their hands. While Ricardo is annoyed it can be inferred that some students show fear for his anger. We can see a striking contrast with how bonding occurs in the examples of Ricardo and Sofía. Emotions contribute to creating either closeness or distance among participants in social practice (in this case, either student-student, or teacher in relation to students and *vice versa*). The transformation in the distance among participants happens in a gradient that seems to go between accompaniment and contestation of emotions via speech or movements associated with emotions.

Students show their enjoyment of the joke with big movements and noisy cackles, while Sofía laughs quietly holding her hands together. By contrast, Ricardo shows his anger with a hard tone, while the students, even Teresa, show their emotions in a quieter way. The level (amplitude of movement or sound) in which emotions are expressed, differs relationally in the two classrooms, so teachers’ and students’ emotions develop in a

different way, independently of the fact that among students there are also differences, possibly related to gender, cultural origins, etc. My point here is that the different positions as 'teacher' or 'student' function as part of the predefined division of labour (Engestrom, 1987) and hierarchy in the classrooms, and they allow for certain ways in which emotions emerge and develop and eventually might transform or restate the pre-established relations.

Moreover, emotions are closely linked to the power relations. In Sofía's class, as I have pointed out, she regains power with her sensitivity, empathetic movements and laughter. This allows her to lead the return to the task, with the students' willingness to follow. By contrast, Ricardo restates his power by force, in an explicit incitement to students' engagement into the task, and as part of this, in his expression of annoyance when Teresa's screen is out of place. This might be contributing to the creation of distance between him and with his students.

Power is implicit in the assumption of teachers' different positions with regards to their students, and not only because of the imbalance between adults and adolescents, but also due to their leadership in the pedagogic practices, which implies authority, expertise, mastery, and skills. There are in fact different ways in which power can be used, and so, power is not always reduced to abusive or imposed power. For this reason, power involves strength that can be linked to leading, allowing, supporting and empowering others; although it can also be linked to control, influence, dominance or coercion. Sofía's way of exercising power is more empathetic and students follow her lead while Ricardo states his dominance and students are frightened into silence and immobility. Teresa and the student who moved the screen (which could have been her) respond to Ricardo's dominance contesting his power. In both classes, teachers have an authority given by their relative positions in the classroom, but the use of power is different, and emotions are also linked to the transformation of power relations.

In the data presented, the role of emotions in the relations among participants in the social practice is related to the transformation of bonds, creating closeness or distance, transforming or restating the power relations. Although Hargreaves's (2001) concept of emotional geographies is used to map teachers' recollections of emotionally laden interactions with those around them, its use seems appropriate in this case in which the data gathered through observation suggest potential geographical maps. On them, we could depict the relational places between teachers and students, and represent rises and falls in power relationships of the practices observed.

– *Emotions and relations with artefacts and circumstances in the setting*

Apart from the relationships among participants, emotions are present in the engagement with the artefacts and other circumstances present in the situation. In Sofía's lesson, the group engages with the story of Don Quixote and the details of his story, but also with the joke; in Ricardo's lesson, the group engages with computers in the setting of the media classroom (as the theme 'presentations' is not yet part of the excerpt presented above), and with Ricardo's anger when he faces Teresa's misbehaviour. In both classes, emotions seem to play a role in relation to artefacts (books and computers) and to the way in which changes to circumstances emerge in the situation (joke and misbehaviour). I will start by discussing this latter point.

Jokes and misbehaviour emerge in the classroom thanks to the students. In this sense, students bring about or produce surprising behaviours to the class. The teachers and the rest of the class then respond to these emergent circumstances. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, students, particularly the boys, laughed loudly following the joke, and Sofía also laughed, although in a more moderate manner. In the excerpt presented in this chapter, Ricardo detected misbehaviour and students' reactions (stillness, looking at hands) were mainly linked to Ricardo's anger after his discovery of Teresa's screen being in the wrong place. Emotions are then important in the teachers' and students involvement with the situations in which they are immersed.

Regarding 'artefacts', emotions might be the result of an association between the situation and the artefacts in use. A link between the enjoyment–laughter episode and Don Quixote, the Spanish classroom and the Spanish subject emerges in Sofía's micro-situation. On the other hand, anger and fear are linked to computers and presentations, the media classroom, and the Spanish subject. Although we cannot establish that these links will remain after these episodes, the emotions mentioned are associated with the participation in this situation. Although further research might shed light on the link between emotions, artefacts and circumstances in the setting, we might wonder if these associations might contribute to the emotional involvement that students have with schools. My main point in this sub-section, however, is to underline that emotions are not reduced to the relations among people, but that they have to do with the involvement in social practices, which are eventually linked to the transformation of the world.



– *Emotions, goals of the task and object of the activity*

The teleology (orientation to the future) of social practices and the link of actions with particular futures is two-fold: towards the goal of the actions, in this case pedagogic tasks, and towards an end defined as the core of the practice (Leontiev, 1974), in this case students' learning. As I suggested in the previous chapter, laughter in Sofía's class would not need to be modulated in the same manner in other social practices, for example, if all the participants were adults laughing at a picnic. In the same manner, Ricardo's or Teresa's anger could have been enacted in a different manner if they were parent and child at home, or the anger had been part of an argument between Ricardo and the head teacher Teresa.

While in activity theory, emotions are usually associated to the pursuit of the objective of the activity, driven by a motive (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, Miettinen and Punamäki-Gitai, 1999), the data presented in the case of both Sofía's and Ricardo's classes suggest that emotions are present in different ways (towards the relations among participants in a social practice and towards artefacts and settings). Additionally, emotions are also linked to the future, in the pursuit of goals and objectives. This might be related, for example, to the case of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), in which individuals 'accommodate' their emotions to the institution, to the context. However, it is not always the case that emotions are in line or 'functional' to both the objective of the activity (student's learning) and the goal of the actions (Leontiev, 1974). It can be presumed that in terms of the action, both Ricardo and Sofía are pursuing the engagement of the students in the activities that they have planned, as well as in managing the time of their lessons in order to achieve the goals. It can also be presumed that their motive is students' learning. However, although laughter, anger and fear are modulated by those potential futures, motive and goal are still under negotiation.

In this section, I discussed how emotions are not only linked to the relations among the participants in a social practice, but also linked to artefacts and emergent situations, and to the purposes, and thus, emotions cannot be reduced to motives or motivation. Emotions are at the centre of people's engagements with the situation in which they participate in every aspect and as a whole. Revisiting my definitions of emotions, they comprise the affect in relation to interactions with others, as much as to the transformation of the world – through the transformation of social practices, which involve artifacts and circumstances, goals and object of the activity.

### ***Emotions: repetition or change***

The final question suggested in Chapter 5 in relation to practice is: Can the role of emotions in the reproduction and transformation of practices be inferred?

The materiality of emotions (noises, movements, and presumably the particular kind of activities in the brain) is socially constructed. Nevertheless, we can see in the two classroom excerpts analysed so far that emotions have a role in the redefinition of what might be presumed to be the same cultural contexts. This is to say that although the two classrooms are part of the same school (and thus, they are part of the same culture, school culture, as Cole, 1990, suggests), so they are mediated by the same division of labour, rules and tools and artefacts (Engestrom, 1987), there is a local history developing in each of the classes.

Following the discussions above, we can infer that participants in Sofía's and Ricardo's class engage in quite dissimilar experiences not only regarding the relations among participants (teachers and students), but also in terms of the possibilities of what might happen in the future. This is to say that several things can potentially differ in each classroom in the near future: the use of the tools at hand, (books or computers), the range of 'acceptable' responses from other participants in the context, the transformation of the physical space, the way in which power relations are negotiated, etc.

The issue mentioned above contests the literature about social practices in which repetitiveness or 'routinisation' of practice have been emphasized (Reckwitz, 2002). In the data presented so far, it is of course possible to identify routines in practices such as the raised index finger used by the two teachers to warn the students, or in Sofía's Initiation, Response, Feedback exchange pattern at the end of the excerpt. Those routines contribute to holding the group and supporting the role of the teachers in the negotiation of the relations with adolescents. Simultaneously, however, elements of change can be observed: enjoyment and pleasure and anger-fear can be inferred to contribute in a different manner to the development of the local history of each of the two classes observed so far, and presumably to the individual experiences of each student.

All things considered, the focus on social practices allows also the possibility of understanding the role of emotions both in the repetitive character of social practice as well as in their openness. Emotions cannot be reduced to motivation/lack of motivation to participate. As we have seen, several other aspects are involved in the way in which

emotions are part of practices. For this reason emotions contribute to the ‘openness’ of practice, and they give way to elements that can untie loose ends or tie them in a different manner. The engagement of the subjects through their participation is never fully ‘free’; it is structured, but it has in itself ranges of ‘freedom’ that emerge over time. Emotions happen as features that occur ‘on the spot’ and can have diverse outcomes, which are socially constructed in the present time. For this reason, emotions can be linked to the transformation of the process and the potential end or product of a social practice, in this case, students’ learning.

### **Wrapping up**

The aims of the second data chapter were to present a second detailed excerpt of data and to address the issue of emotions as part of the focus on social practice. I addressed the questions posed in Chapter 5, in relation to this focus, based on the data of the two excerpts presented so far. In so doing, I discussed the embodiment of emotions in practice, diversity of life experience at participation, some functions of emotions in the classroom and the way in which emotions are part of the continuity or rupture of the situated history participants’ present time.

## **Chapter 8 – Little voices: Microhistory of Emotions**

### **Introduction**

This is the final chapter of data analysis. Its aim is to address the third analytic focus. A historical approach to the analysis of emotions stresses the fact that emotions change over different scales of time, and I underlined the importance of studying them over short lapses, which could be called interactional time, and which I call microhistory.

As in the two previous chapters, I present a new data section with an excerpt, a microsituation and then I address the transformation and shaping of emotions in microhistory. In this chapter, I argue that thanks to the study of microhistory, patterns can be identified in relation to the emergence and transformation of emotions. Also, contradictions in the social relations that are associated with the developmental process of both adolescents and teachers that participate in the social practice are analysed. The fact that the study took place in secondary classrooms makes it necessary to discuss the negativity or rebelliousness implied in a rejection of the old that students bring to the negotiations that take place in classrooms. Students' surprises then, also have an impact on the shaping of emotions, questioning the possibility of defining causes of emotions in a simplistic manner. Additionally, the role of emotions in the collective transformation of the classrooms can be discussed, as well as the impact of different ways in which an emotional environment or climate is structured in different teachers' practices.

I argue that the present is not a linear unfolding from the past, but also a pulling to the future, implicit in the motive of being in a classroom, which in turn is translated into the plans and goals brought about by the teacher. This pulling to the future implies intentions, which are negotiated with 'surprises' brought up by students. Such a combination offers a path for particular emotions that emerge, change and fade away. Finally, I argue that the negotiations between students and their teacher offer different paths of collective transformations in particular classrooms, which may lead to different ways of doing things together.

### **Fighting with words: Little voices**

I now present a further excerpt, 2 minutes 44 seconds long, in which it is possible to identify what happens when there are differences of opinion (or perspective) between the teacher and the students, and when a confrontation takes place as a result. Luisa, the

teacher, is working with a group of students in their second year of secondary school. In this excerpt, Luisa engages in an argument with a student, Roberto, when he challenges her lack of support towards him when he faced a problem with another teacher.



**Figure 14. Most of Luisa's class**

Luisa is standing up at the front of the classroom with two students standing slightly behind her (Figure 1). Luisa had asked the two students to stand up before the beginning of the excerpt, due to misbehaviour (they are standing slightly behind Luisa's left side in Figure 1). Luisa has been scolding the class, exhorting them to behave appropriately.

The class were not working on any curricular content, thus they are not using a book, or any other material. During the first minute of the microsituation, Luisa has been speaking ironically, and at some points students have laughed, as it also happens in the micro-situation below. After the excerpt that is analysed below, the subject of the lesson that they will start working on is the use of 'predicative', but as we can see below there is no indication about the curricular content on which they will work. Regrettably, compared with the other excerpts presented in this thesis (Chapters 6, 7 and 9), in this one images are blurred. This is perhaps due to the conditions of recording in this classroom, in relation to light and time of the day, as lessons took place in the evening.

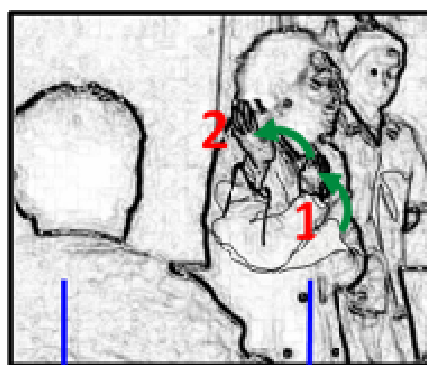
## Let's talk about the reports

1. **Luisa:** ... let's see
2. youngsters...
3. take out
4. (almost
5. inaudible)...



Roberto Luisa Roberto Luis

6. **Luisa:** (silence)



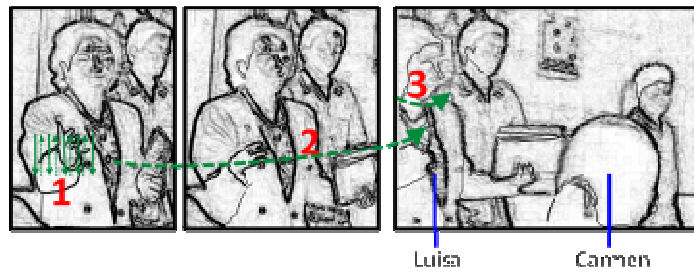
Roberto

Luisa

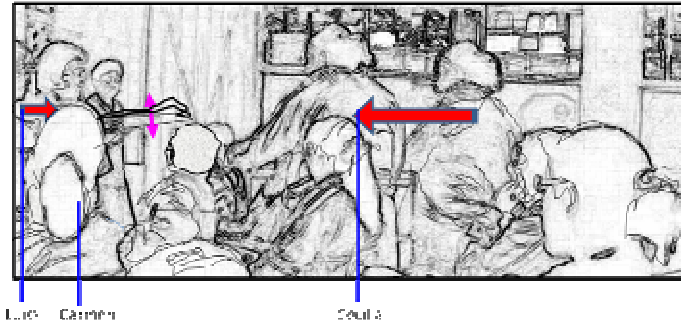


Luisa is holding a folder to her chest, with both hands. She turns to the left side while talking to the group (lines 1 and 2). She starts asking the students to take out 'something', possibly the book or a notebook, but she stops in the middle of the sentence (lines 3 to 5). Immediately after stopping, she is silent for 2 seconds in which she briefly puts her hand on her chest (number 1 in line 6), then she puts her open hand up (number 2 in line 6); and finally, she puts down three fingers to leave her index finger up (number 3 in line 8). Luisa hesitates and it seems that she wanted to start working on her subject, with the group, but she stays silent for some few seconds, and then she changes her mind and stops (line 7 below).

7. **Luisa:** ... where is the...  
 8. the folder of the  
 9. reports<sup>13</sup>...  
 10. **Boy:** ---Cecilia!



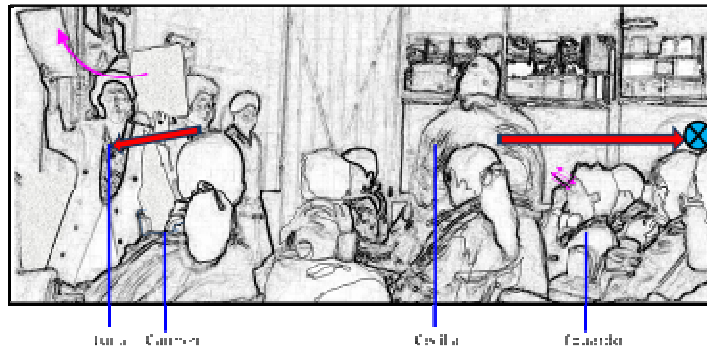
11. **Luisa:** ... give it to me  
 12. right now... so  
 13. that I take it with  
 14. me...



While speaking, Luisa moves her right hand up and down repetitively before she produces the words ‘the folder of the reports’ (lines 7 and 8, number 1). Then she mimes holding a big box in her hands and observes one student in front of her in an attempt to find out to find out who has the folder (lines 8 and 9, number 2). When somebody shouts Cecilia’s name (line 10) Luisa turns slightly to her left. She sees that Cecilia is standing up and walking towards her. Somebody whistles. This also happened in some other lessons Luisa had with this group, but she does not seem to hear or pay attention to those sounds. Cecilia walks towards the front and Luisa moves towards her and receives the folder (lines 11 to 14). Cecilia then goes back to her place, while Luisa puts the folder up (lines 15 and 16). Another whistle is heard. From the angle of the camera, everybody looks still, although the faces are not seen, except for Eduardo, who is holding his pen with his right hand, and repeatedly tapping his forehead with it (lines 15 to 16).

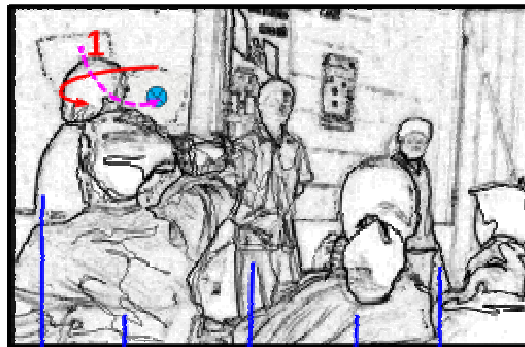
<sup>13</sup> ‘The folder of the reports’ is the folder where teachers of all the subjects write ‘reports’ about each student, mainly in relation to discipline issues, but also regarding lack of material or academic issues. This is the main record in the school about the student and a student representative in each group is in charge of keeping the folder.

15. **Luisa:** ... I promise  
16. you...

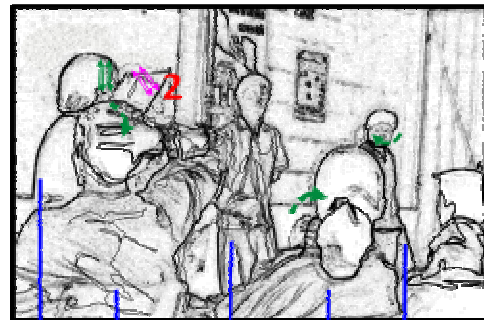


Luisa then turns 'in U', to her left towards the door (line 17, red and pink arrows in number 1) and then, she moves the folder up and down while nodding in a slightly threatening gesture (lines 18 to 20, sets of green and pink arrows in number 22). The students continue to sit quite still with only small movements: Roberto moves his right hand down on his head. Carmen turns slightly to the left, and Claudio turns towards Luisa. The atmosphere is tense. Luisa's sentence cannot be heard in the recording, but she is saying something about having more than five reports in the folder.

17. **Luisa:** (silence)  
18. **Luisa:** ... those that have more than five...  
19. youngsters...  
20. (in very low volume)



(a)

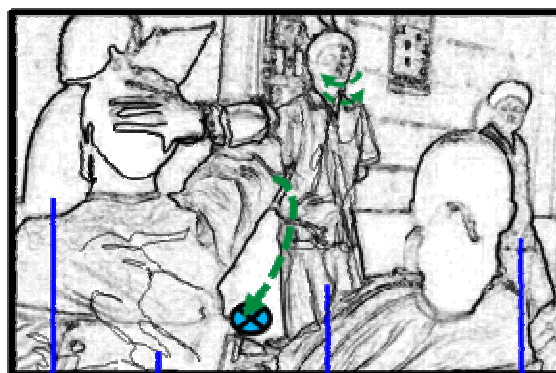


(b)

While Luisa continues speaking there are some small movements among the students (lines 22 to 23). For example, Armando turns towards his left to see Claudio, and then turns back towards Luisa; Roberto puts his arm down, while Luisa stops for two seconds (line 24). In the same fashion, some small movements continue and the students seem to be impatient.



21. **Luisa:** ... already will be bringing  
 22. his/her<sup>14</sup> fa... his/her tutor...  
 23. **Luisa:** (silence)



Luisa Roberto Armando Claudio

At this point is necessary to underline that the way she talks is unusual. A standard way of referring to parents in official documents is to say 'parent or guardian', for example, in the space where the parent has to sign in the registration forms at the beginning of the school year. The word 'fathers' is used as parents. However, it is not the most common term when talking to the students. The word for 'guardian' in Spanish (*tutor*) does not imply gender, and that could be a reason to use it. It is also likely that she uses that word to stress the formality of the admonition. 'Guardian' could be any other person in charge of the student, like a grandparent or another relative or adult responsible for signing the notes every term

In secondary schools in Mexico it is common for the groups with the worst reputation for discipline problems to be the second years, and it is humorously referred to as a disease, as it is said that they get 'second-itis'.

24. **Luisa:**  
 25. (inaudible)<sup>15</sup>



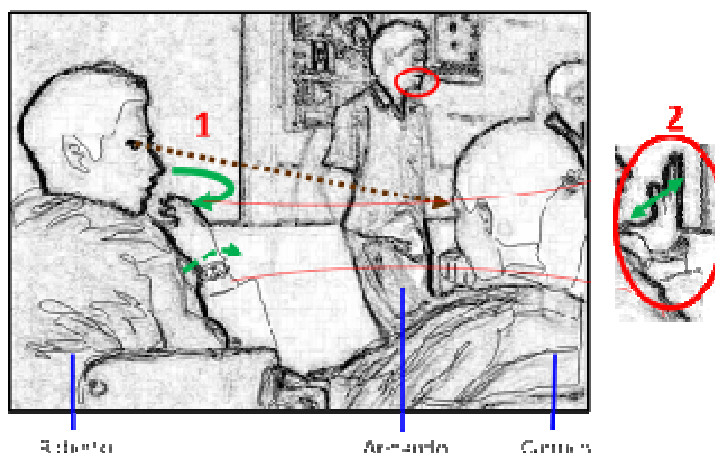
Luisa Roberto Armando Claudio

At this point, she turns to her right to put the folder on the desk. Her words are inaudible, but she looks angry and says 'no' while she shakes her head up and down, in a paradoxical movement, and walking (lines 24 and 25). Roberto turns to see Carmen,

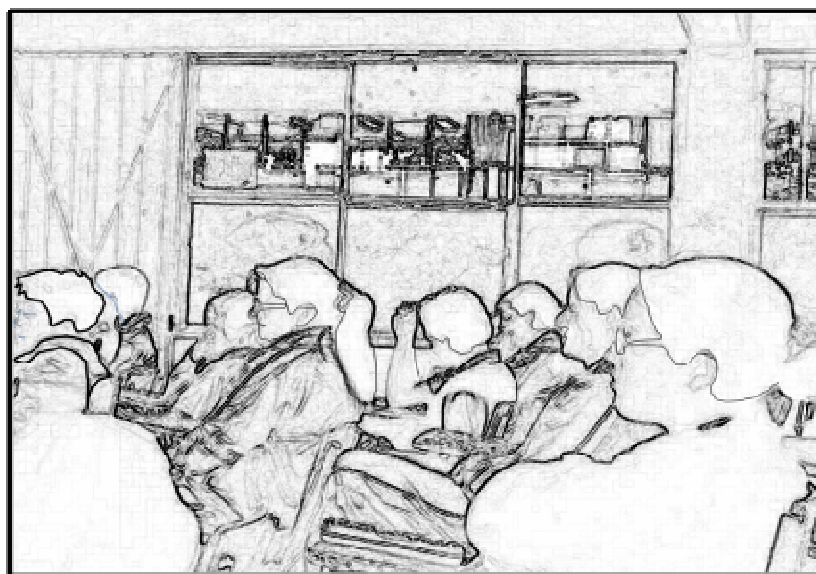
<sup>14</sup> His/her has the same word in Spanish.

while Armando repeatedly moves his chin up trying to communicate with a student seated in the row in front of him.

26. **Luisa:** ... and do not  
27. tell me that  
28. the teachers  
29. are over the  
30. level<sup>16</sup>...



Luisa continues talking, while I do a panning with the camera and get an overview of the students. Roberto says to Carmen, with gestures, that he has five reports (numbers 1 and 2 in the images in lines 26 to 30); while Armando smiles at a student in the row in front of him (lines 27 to 30). Occasionally, some students talk among themselves, but in general they are mostly still and quiet.



Luisa starts speaking in an ironic tone, but in an ambiguous way and the students laugh. It was ambiguous for me as an observer because it was not clear if she was referring to students' behaviour or teachers' behaviour. However, although I thought that the

<sup>15</sup> It might be: 'because one cannot continue like this', but the volume is very low.

<sup>16</sup> She literally says 'se pasan'. This is a slang expression 'goes over the level' ('se pasa') it means that they are abusing.

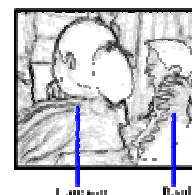
students' laughter had to do with this perceived lack of clarity, they were actually laughing (line 33) at the fact that they knew what she was talking about when she was using slang. Apparently she was talking about Roberto (lines 31 and 32).

31. **Luisa:** ... I also go over the level ... because also, I have listened to marvellous  
 32. things...  
 33. **Students:** ---laughter at lower volume

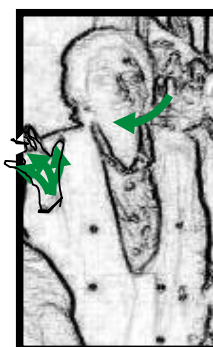


34. **Luisa:** ... that they tell me...

35. **Luisa:** ...it is very intolerant...  
 36. **Boy?:** ---Laughing  
 37. **Several students:** ---Laughing  
 38. **Luisa:** ... very aggressive...  
 39. **Several students:** ---Laughing  
 40. **Roberto:** ---yes  
 41. **Luisa:** ... very rude  
 42. **Several students:** Laughter



43. **Luisa:** ... for example...  
 some of your charming-qualities<sup>17</sup>



(a)

(b)

Luisa puts her right hand up, facing the students and at the height of her right shoulder. The gesture seems to express something like: "It is not me, that is what they say" (line 34). Then she emphasizes the words 'intolerant' (line 35), 'aggressive' (line 38), 'rude' (line 40), by moving her right hand down in coincidence with each word. She does not look specifically at a particular student. She pauses for a couple of seconds, while moving her head to the right to look towards another part of the class, then she says 'for example', nodding and opening her hand (line 42). At this point she made a gesture with

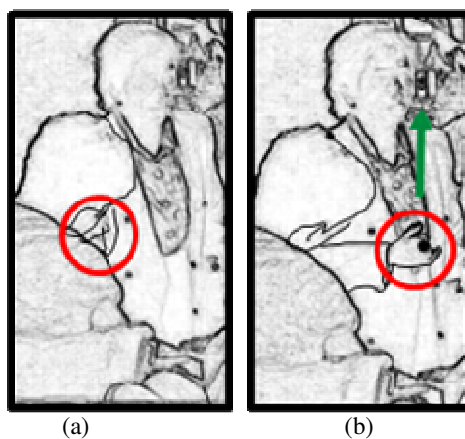
<sup>17</sup> She uses a slang word here: 'lindeces', which is commonly used ironically when scolding or arguing, referring to bad behaviour.

her mouth, arching her lips down, which suggests that she does not know if there are more ‘charming’ adjectives to describe students’ behaviour. However, as we will see below, this comment seems to involve an ironic remark, because she knows that it is not an example, but something that in fact took place. This last assumption seems to be supported by what we will see below; also, she briefly looks at Roberto who is seated next to her. At this point it becomes clear that she is talking about the students as she declares so, speaking with irony (lines 43), while Roberto leans his head to his right (line 43, b). Luisa has had a serious expression during this time.

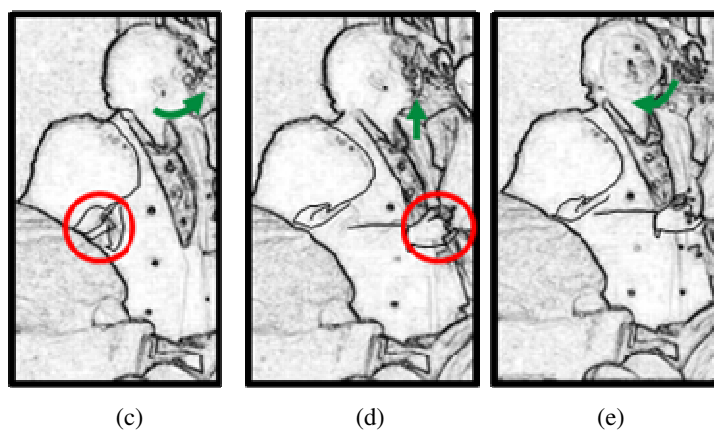
### ***Luisa and Roberto***

Luisa continues talking with her right hand up (line 44) and then nods and moves her head facing to diverse angles while her right hand follows her speech (in her left hand, she is carrying a folder the she has had with her from the beginning of the class): pointing to Roberto (line 45, image a), to the centre of her body (lines 46 to 47, image b), to the right pointing at Roberto again (line 48, image c), and then back to the centre of her body in coincidence with ‘in that way’, to give an emphasis to her assertion (line 49, image d). Surprisingly for the observer at this point it seems that this is a dialogue between Luisa and Roberto. It is possible that Roberto, who is seated close to Luisa, said something at some point for which Luisa engages in a conversation with him, but it seems more likely that she has been talking about an incident in which he was involved; possibly he complained about the ways teachers treat him using the adjectives in lines 34 to 40. Luisa’s gaze goes to Roberto, her eyes look almost closed, due to the short distance between Roberto and her.

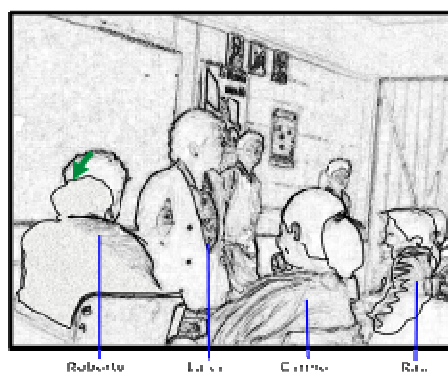
44. **Luisa:** ... then...  
 45. how do you<sup>18</sup> (a) want...  
 46. that the teachers be... (b)  
 47. treat you...  
 48. if you be... behave (c)  
 49. in that way (d)



<sup>18</sup> She speaks in the singular and in a formal manner (*de usted*).



Looking backwards, the ‘yes’ that he expressed in line 40 implies a greater involvement with what Luisa is expressing; she was referring specifically to Roberto back in lines 35 to 41, because Roberto moves in a particular way (green arrow in Figure 2 below), putting his head down.,



**Figure 15. Roberto looking down at his table**

Luisa asks Roberto for an answer. At this point we can see that what she has been saying is not only rhetoric. Leaning her head to her right, Luisa puts her hand briefly on her chest and then looks at him, waiting for an answer with her arms crossed and holding her folder. Roberto leans his head in the opposite direction, to his own right. However, the demand is quite challenging: “tell me”, and the students laugh.

50. **Luisa:** ... let see



51. **Luisa:** ... tell me  
52. **Students:** ---laughter



Roberto continues with his head leaning to his right. Luisa moved backwards and she is waiting for the answer with a 'smile' that is a like a grimace (Figure 2).



**Figure 16.** Luisa is waiting for an answer

53. **Roberto:** ... that they ...



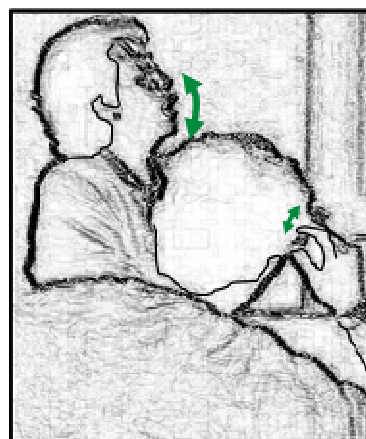
Roberto sounds hesitant but he is answering and he starts moving his hand up.

***That the teachers were fair***

Roberto answers 'that the teachers are fair'. He moves his hand up quickly and scratches his head with his right index finger (lines 53 to 54). Luisa then opens her mouth as if she were about to say something (or possibly she says something inaudible),

and nods, and then the boys laugh loudly (line 56). Luisa then repeats what Roberto said (line 56) and Luisa grimaces.

54. **Roberto:** ... that they were fair and not  
 55. that... (inaudible)  
 56. **Boys:** ---laughing loudly  
 57. **Luisa:** ---yes, that they were fair



While the camera pans to the back, Roberto starts talking, extending his hand to the front in the direction of the teacher (green arrow, line 57). The students that appear in the camera are not laughing any more (lines 57 onwards). The students seem bored.

58. **Roberto:** ... ah... like the one of physics<sup>19</sup>... that I  
 59. did not break him any... any...  
 60. **Boy?**<sup>20</sup>: ---measuring tape...  
 61. **Roberto:** ... measuring tape<sup>21</sup> ... and he wanted that  
 I bought one...

Roberto starts talking about an incident with the physics teacher (lines 58 onwards), but he gets stuck because he does not remember the word he wants to use (line 58). A boy mentions the word “measuring tape”, and Roberto repeats it and finishes his sentence. His movements while talking are not seen from the perspective of the camera, and Luisa remains still, listening to him.

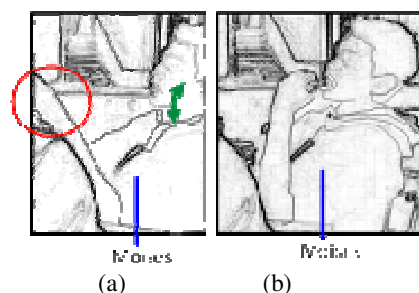
<sup>19</sup> He refers to the physics teacher and uses an expression that is not very polite, because he does not mention the word ‘teacher’ (however, it is not rude, either).

<sup>20</sup> The boy that participates could be Raúl (lines 34 to 41).

<sup>21</sup> He uses the technical word: ‘flexómetro’ (it is not the everyday term for the measurement tape, and I had to look it up in the dictionary).

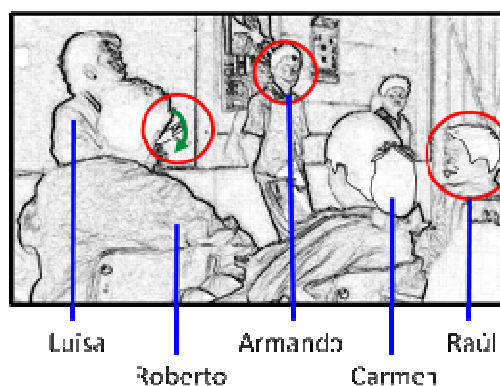


62. **Moisés:** ... yes.. yes... yes... only taking it out...  
 63. **Boys:** yes (incomprehensible)  
 64. **Boys:** ---yes (incomprehensible)  
 65. **Boy:** ---bigger  
 66. **Boys:** ---yes (incomprehensible)  
 67. **Moisés:** ... yes... you see now?  
 68. **Luisa:** well...



Moisés, from the back of the classroom, and other students confirm Roberto's assertion (in line 62). For some seconds many students say yes, and the rest is incomprehensible (lines 63, 64 and 66), except for the word "bigger" (an expression that has two words in Spanish, line 65). Moisés restates his support on the basis of the support of the other students (line 67).

69. **Luisa:** ... (inaudible)  
 70. **Roberto:** ---why... why you did not  
 71. help me?  
 72. **Students:** (loud laughter)  
 73. **Luisa:** well... have you informed  
 74. me?

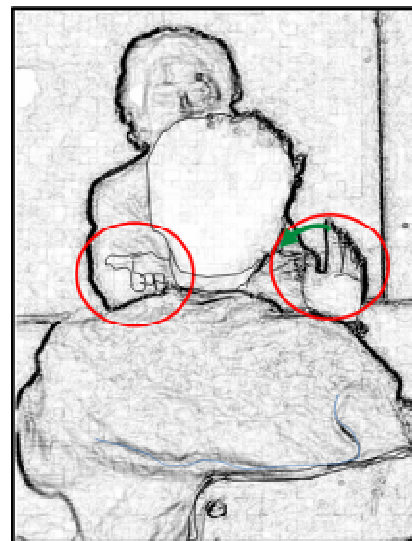


Luisa's response is inaudible (line 69), and Roberto's question (lines 70 and 71) is hilarious for the rest of the students, who chuckle. Armando and Raúl are laughing (line 72). Luisa moves her right hand down to calm the laughter. This gesture, together with



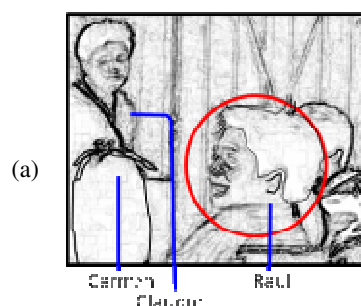
her expression, also gives the idea of “calm down, you will see” (green arrow in line 73).

75. **Luisa:** ... only now I get to know this  
 76. situation  
 77. **Students:** (... laughter continues)  
 78. **Roberto:** ---but (inaudible)



Luisa moves her hand to her chest (line 75) and then puts her palm facing up with her fingers towards Roberto (left side in lines 76 to 78). Roberto attempts to protest, interrupting Luisa (line 80), but what he says is inaudible due to the laughter and Luisa’s interruption, trying to silence him while she puts her hand up as if saying ‘stop’ (line 79, a). However, he continues speaking (line 81). Luisa’s face and the movements of her hands, are, as we will see below, an important part of the dialogue. Roberto’s movement is energetic and students start moving in different ways, possibly denoting that they are bored, tired or uncomfortable.

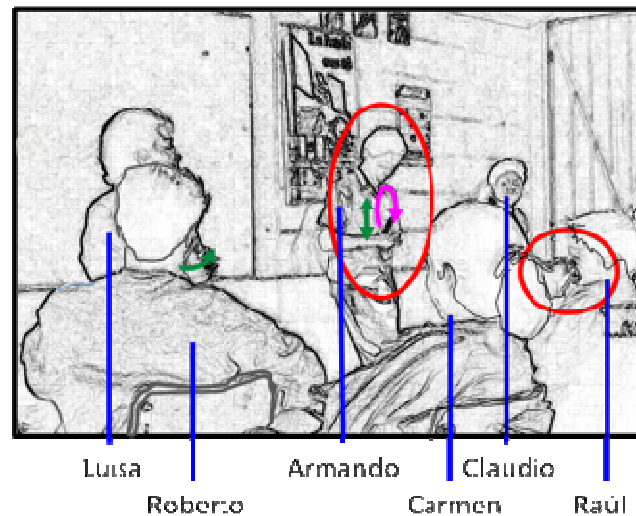
79. **Luisa:** ---sh-sh-sh sh sh  
 80. **Roberto:** ---y-... you get to know that the teachers do... do<sup>22</sup>...  
 81. **Luisa:** ---good



<sup>22</sup> Here, he literally says in Spanish “yes... yes”, however, it makes sense to translate it in English as ‘do... do’. Apparently, he wants to complain about the fact that teachers do write reports about what we students do, and not the other way round.



82. **Students:** (loud laughter)

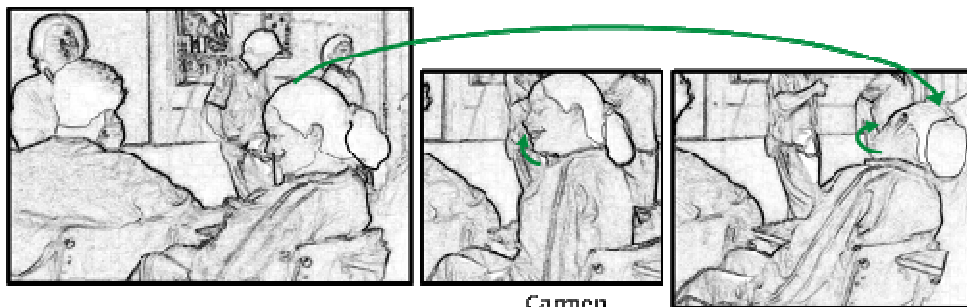


Roberto points at Luisa, when he says ‘you’, almost imperceptibly in the drawn image from this angle (line 80, a), but he continues moving his hand fast to point upwards, giving an impression of authority (particularly in line 80, b). Luisa’s answer feels a bit desperate: “Good”, she says quickly (line 81). It is the speed at which she talks which makes this sounds desperate, and funny from the students’ perspective, so they laugh (line 82). At this point, she seems to be losing this argument with Roberto. Not everybody is laughing, but Raúl (in lines 80 and 81, image d and in line 82) is one of the students that is doing so, and Armando is laughing while he throws his pen up and catches it, but Claudio seems bored and disengaged. At this point, Luisa moves her hand to her left while some students laugh (line 82), which can be interpreted as “calm down” or most likely as “wait”. She does this movement relatively slowly.

This excerpt might feel slightly long for the reader. However, it illustrates the ‘feeling’ of boredom and confusion that students display in the video. Also, and most importantly, the purpose of this presentation is to offer enough detail to allow microhistorical analysis of emotions in microsituations.

Returning to the example, Luisa defends herself, questioning Roberto for not letting her know that he had a problem (lines 83 to 85). The situation continues being a bit funny for the students, possibly because Roberto finds ways of answering and challenging Luisa. Carmen (lines 83 and 84) is smiling while she changes posture turning to her left and then twisting her head and her body to the right. The rest of the group continues laughing relatively quietly.

83. **Luisa:** have you come to me to tell me...  
 84. **Students:** (laughter continues)

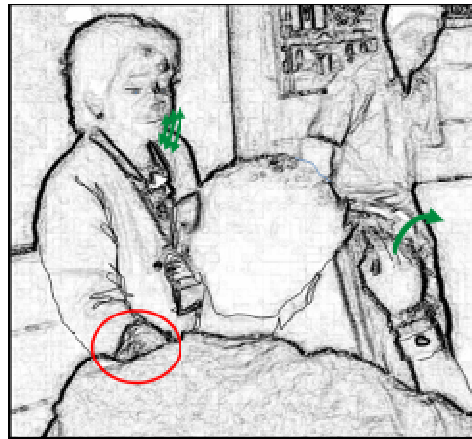


85. **Luisa:** ... “teacher, I have this problem”?

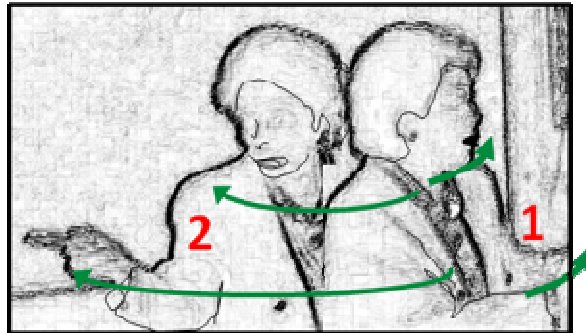


Luisa points to Roberto with her hand and nods (line 85). She questions that Roberto did not inform her about the problem with the physics teacher (lines 83 and 85). He moves his right hand to his right in a way that seems to be dismissive, while answering that she was supposed to know that (lines 86 and 87).

86. **Roberto:** no, but you do know that they  
87. write reports about me...



88. **Luisa:** ...I already saw...  
89. the... folder



At this point the discussion becomes confusing. It seems that Luisa does not understand the sense of Roberto's questioning: "you should know that I was in trouble, because you get to know that they write reports about me". Luisa, defensive and hesitating in her movements, on the contrary, refers to the fact that she has been looking at the reports. She moves her hand to the notebook she has been holding from the beginning, as if that was the folder (line 89, 1), but in looking at it, she seems to realise that the folders where the teachers write reports about the students is on her desk, so she points towards her right (line 89, 2). Looking at Roberto, Luisa explains that that is how she knows.

90. **Luisa:** ... that is how I know  
91. **Boy:** ---there it says that he broke  
92. the measuring tape

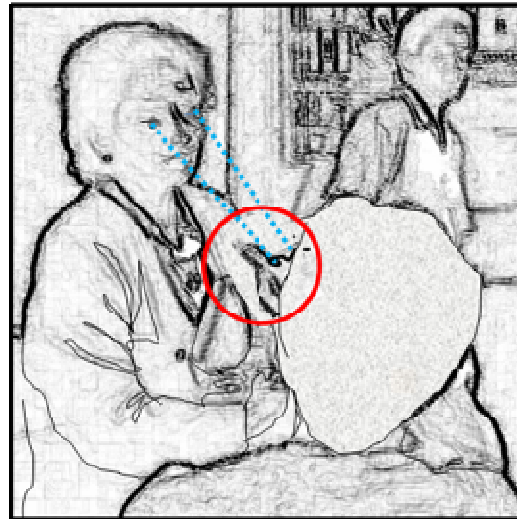


### *That is dangerous*

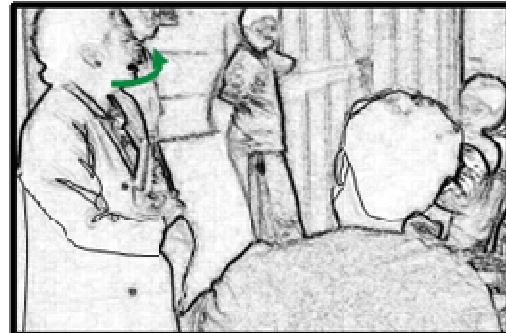
Another boy who does not appear in the shot becomes Roberto's ally, supporting his argument that the teacher should know that in the report about Roberto it was written that he broke the measuring tape (lines 91 and 92). Roberto does not pick up this

argument, but starts a new one. Apparently Louisa has told them before this excerpt that she gets to know about their behaviour because she hears ‘little voices’. This expression suggests that teachers or prefects tell her about this group of students’ behaviour. This is the new argument that Roberto attempts to put forward to challenge Luisa (lines 94 to 97). He does not seem to sustain it clearly. However, at the beginning of his argument he does something that is considered very rude, as I mentioned in Chapter 6: he points at Luisa. He does this very briefly (lines 93 to 97) for less than a second.

93. **Roberto:** ---what... for do you  
 94. (then) mention that some little  
 95. voices... there... and that...

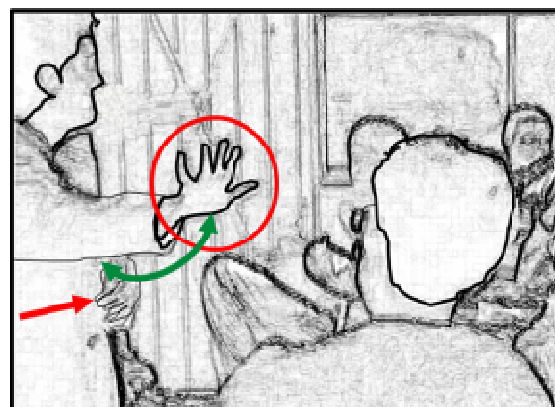


96. **Luisa:** little voices (in very low  
 97. volume)...  
 98. **Roberto:** ---aha... and that...

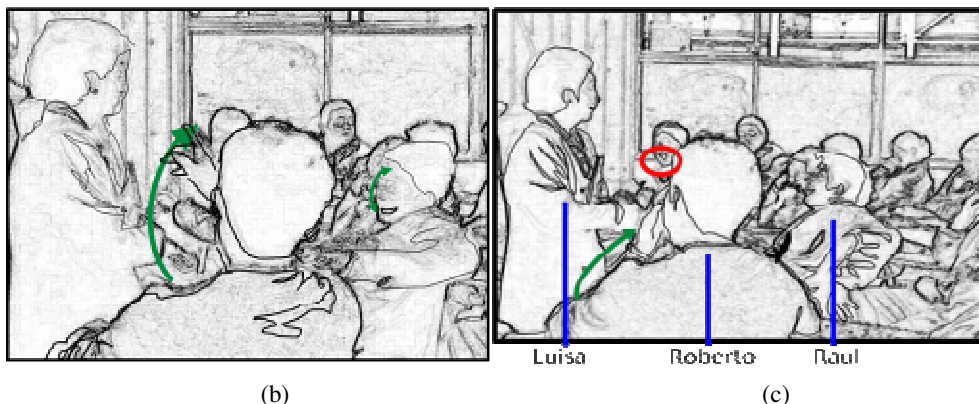


Luisa repeats ‘little voices’ turning to her left (lines 99). This gesture seems like a rejection of what Roberto said. Roberto then makes attempts to elaborate (line 100).

99. **Luisa:** ---little voices...  
 100. you hear little voices  
 101. already... that is  
 102. even dangerous...  
 103 **Students:** (loud laughter)

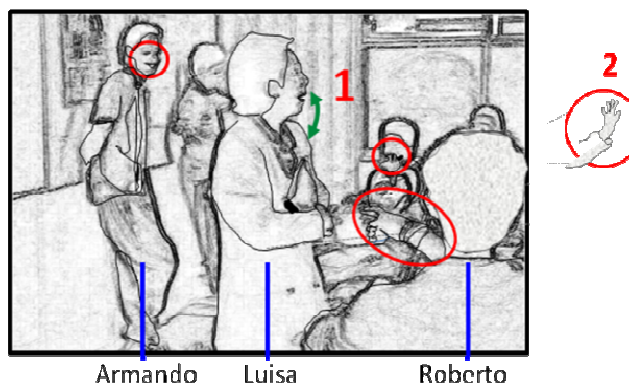


(a)



Luisa puts her hand with her palm towards him and walks to the front and slightly to her left further away from Roberto, and then she brings her arm close to her body holding her notebook again (lines 101 to 104, a) . The students laugh loudly (line 105). Roberto points at Luisa by moving his right hand upwards (lines 104 to 105 b), and then cleans his face, apparently his left eye, with his left hand (lines 104 to 105 c). He might be saying something but if that is the case then it is inaudible. Raúl puts his head back and laughs noisily (lines 104 to 105 b); a boy close to the window is laughing with his mouth open (lines 104 to 105 c). Some banging is heard in the background, which is perhaps someone banging on the table, as we saw in Sofía's class in Chapter 6.

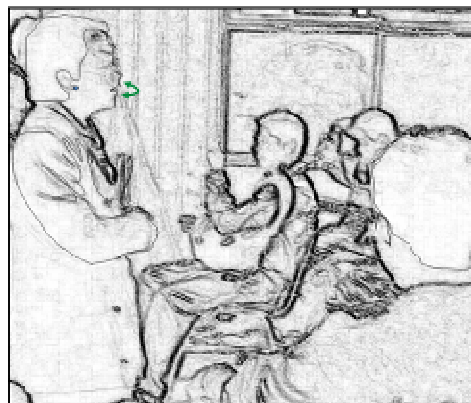
104. **Luisa:** ... careful (in very  
105. low volume)  
106. **Roberto:** ---well... did not  
107. she say so a  
108. moment ago?  
109. **Students:** (laughter continues)  
110. **Luisa:** ---careful with the  
111. little voices...  
112. **Students:** (louder laughter)



Luisa does not look at Roberto; she looks straight at the group with a slight smile (line 106). Roberto points at the teacher and looks towards his classmates (his head is slightly to his right, although from this angle his gaze cannot be seen) and asks them for confirmation (lines 106 and 108, 1). Luisa continues looking away from Roberto (lines 106 and 108, image 1). Then Luisa mentions again 'little voices', looking at him briefly, nodding and putting her right hand up again, but this time at a slower pace (lines 110 and 111, image 2). Luisa moves her hand to her right and then back to her notebook.

Armando, standing at the front of the class, and a boy close to the window (lines 109 to 112) are laughing noisily all this time, as well as many other students who can be heard, but who do not appear in the shot.

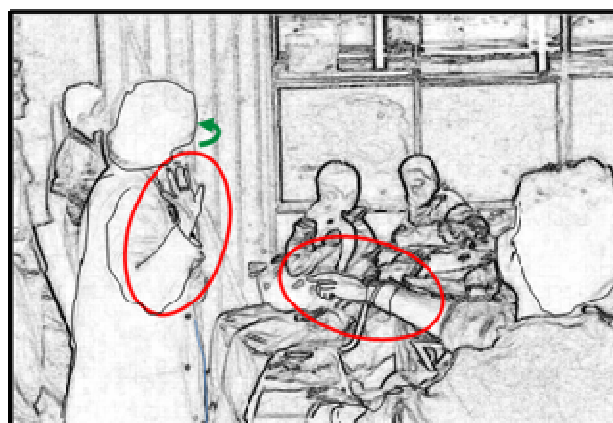
113. **Roberto:** ---or some tongues that...  
 114. **Students:** (laughter continues)



115. **Luisa:** ---no, I do not either...  
 116. **Roberto:** (inaudible)  
 117. **Students:** (laughter continues)



(a)



(b)

The interaction between Luisa and Roberto continues with the accompaniment of the group's laughter. Roberto attempts to defend himself by mentioning the 'tongues', by which he means teachers that talk about students' issues with Luisa, as the group tutor (line 113). Luisa does not accept this point (line 115). Each intervention reactivates the students' laughter (114 and 117). Luisa puts her hand up, as if she is saying 'stop', and steps away from Roberto, keeping her hand up; he points at her, saying something

inaudible (line 116). Luisa walks further away from Roberto, leaning her head and body to her right (lines 118 and 120). Roberto leans his body slightly to the front and softly hits the table twice (line 120).

118. **Boy?:**       you lost!  
119. **Roberto:**     ---but that some  
120.               teachers told you...



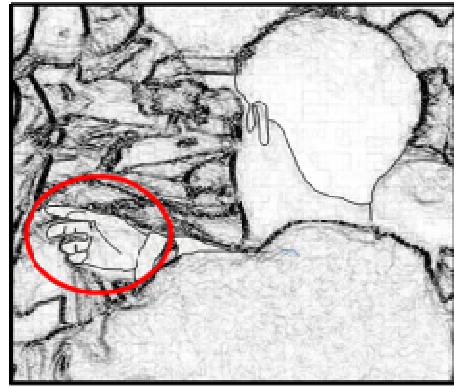
Luisa accepts Roberto's statement about teachers telling her things (lines 124 and 125), but still he is looking for a chance to make a point and to demonstrate that he is right (line 126). He points at Luisa once more and his classmates laugh loudly. There seems to be a circumstantial loyalty in this discussion - it is not that students are allied to their peer Roberto, but that they position themselves alongside the one that wins at each precise moment. Before they supported Roberto's brave challenging of Luisa. Now they applaud Luisa's reduction of Roberto to a 'crazy' person that listens to little voices. A boy asks Roberto if he hears voices (line 127). Roberto seems to have lost his point, and although he continues trying to defend something, he also seems to have lost the argument.

121. **Luisa:**       oh... well that is a different  
122.               thing

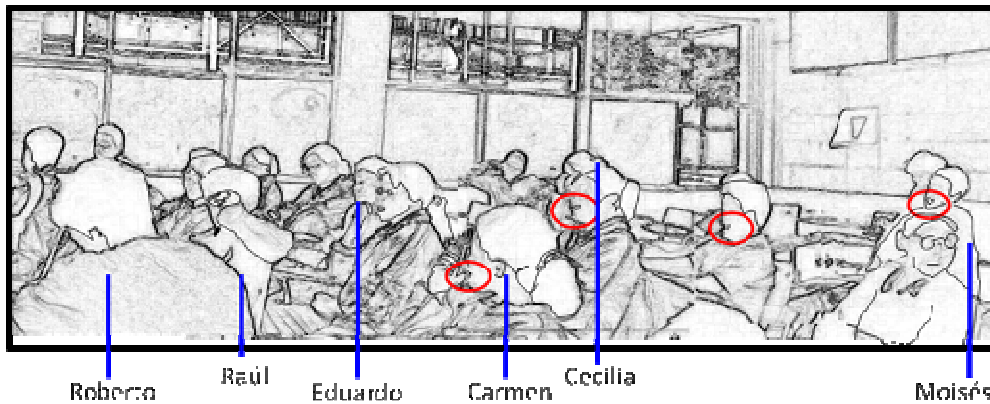




123. **Roberto:** ---ah... you see<sup>23</sup>?  
 124. **Students:** ... (laughing)



125. **Luisa:** ---but look when one listens to little voices... that is a bit dangerous...  
 126. **Students:** ... (laughing)  
 127. **Boy?:** ... do you hear voices?  
 128. **Luisa:** ... stop, youngsters... stop  
 129. **Students:** (laughter vanishes)



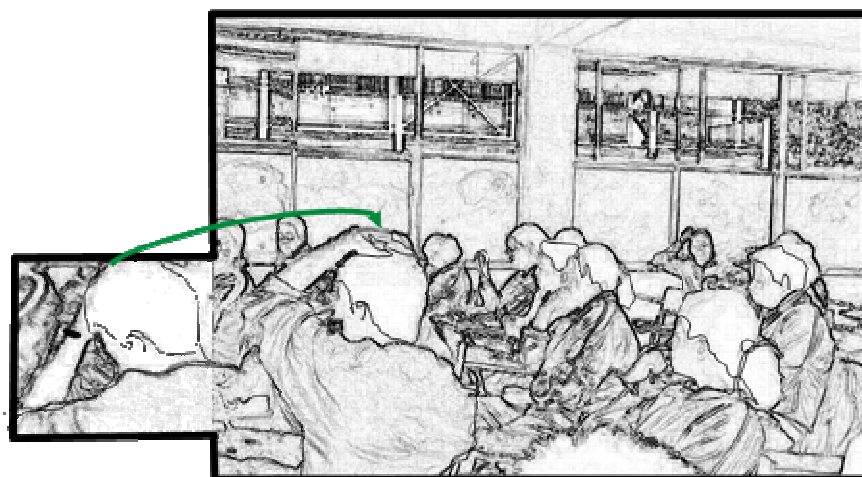
The teacher defines an end to the laughter: “stop”.

### ***Annoyance***

After this, the group is serious. They listen to the teacher (lines 130 to 132) and Roberto is quiet. He brushes his hair with his hand and stays for a while holding his hair (lines 130 to 135). Moving her hand widely, like a butterfly, Luisa shows that she does not feel happy about their lack of interest while she teaches (lines 133 to 135), finishing with an ironic comment: “teachers love that”, that students do not pay attention (line 135, last image of the set).

130. **Luisa:** ... look I am... saying it again... if there is a problem that you consider  
 131. unfair... come to me... but if you only are bothering the teachers and not  
 132. paying attention... why?...

<sup>23</sup> Roberto challenges Luisa here: “Ah, verdad?”



133. **Luisa:** ... because I am also a teacher and it also bothers me that when I am teaching and  
 134. explaining ... and you are just there talking... distracting yourselves... making  
 135. comments... playing... faffing around<sup>24</sup>... teachers love that...



Through this excerpt, following a moment in which the direction of the lesson was unclear, we can see the way in which Luisa and Roberto engaged in an argument when he challenges her lack of support towards him when he faced a problem with another

<sup>24</sup> The expression that she uses here ('papaloteando') means to be distracted, and it is related to the words butterfly and kite, originally from the nahuatl language. This word gives the sense of 'flying around'. My translation has a more static meaning ('being in the moon'), but it could be translated as 'messing around'. Mentioning the moon refers also to the distance and the air, and this is why I chose this expression. Interestingly, when she is referring to students' distraction, Luisa's hand movements look a bit like the flight of a butterfly (lines 135 to 138).

teacher. I showed how both Luisa and Roberto competed for ‘winning’ this ‘duel’, and how other students’ laughter accompanied this process, first in support of Roberto’s challenges to Luisa, then in support of Luisa’s ‘victory’. At the end of this segment, Luisa actively exhorted the students to behave appropriately in their lessons and told them off for not doing so. In the next section, I want to explore the complex flow of microhistory.

In brief, Luisa scolds the group in relation to discipline issues, when a student challenges her for her lack of involvement in an unfair accusation by the physics teacher. After some hesitation, Luisa responds using an expression that the student brings about as an insinuation that he is crazy. The group accompanies the process with laughter, alternatively in favour of the student that challenges, then of the teacher, until she requests that they stop their laughter and scolds them for their behaviour in general.

### **Emotions in the unfolding of the participants’ present time**

As a succinct reminder of the microsituations presented in the previous chapters, in the case of Sofía’s class, the true-or-false question is answered with a joke, and the joke is responded to with laughter, which Sofía briefly joins to later lead the group back to work, and the group follows. In Ricardo’s lesson, the advice to behave is interrupted by a student, Teresa, who had moved her PowerPoint presentation to a wrong screen, which Ricardo responds to with anger, while fixing the computer, later scolding the girl assumed to be responsible. Whilst she protests, the other students respond with stillness, and Ricardo leads to the beginning of work. This recollection might sound slightly repetitive, but with these details, I want to address the questions posed in Chapter 5 in relation to microhistory in order to analyse the emergence, transformation and shaping of emotions as part of the situation. In the three excerpts presented so far we find the way in which the initial situations change over time, with the unfolding of the participants’ present time. Within this, emotions emerge and are transformed in different ways.

Through the analysis of the sequence of events, as diverse as these three microsituations are, it is possible to find some elements in common, patterns which allow comparisons. Additionally, two elements are analysed: the relationship between adolescent rebelliousness and emotions, and the leading role of teachers in creating emotional climates or environments.

### ***Emotions: patterns of emergence, cause or consequence?***

In this section, I address the question, posed in Chapter 5: *Can certain patterns of flow in the emergence and transformation of emotions that take place through time be identified in microsituations? In these patterns, are emotions a cause or a consequence?*

I found four basic elements that constitute a pattern in the sequences of events in the three microsituations depicted so far: (1) A plan is held by the teachers, (2) surprises brought up by the students disrupt teachers' plans, (3) the teachers respond to those surprises, and (4) a resolution or closure of the microsituation occurs. In the three microsituations presented so far, students bring about surprises that disrupt the original plans held by the teachers. I called them surprises, because they emerge unexpectedly and even though all the participants in the classroom face those surprises, teachers have to rise to the challenge in order to rise to the challenge that those surprises pose, in their leading roles as teachers.

Surprises are linked to the distance between the intentions implied in plans held by the teachers when they teach, and the situated actions that take place in the context of the classroom which recalls Suchman's (1987) work. Additionally, surprises have to do with intentions that are not necessarily in agreement with the objective of being in the classroom, and they involve, presumably, students' diverse agendas. In relation to teachers' intentions, it can be assumed that they work according to some sense of time constraint and perhaps aims for the session. This assumption is legitimate, I suggest, not only because it is a requirement of the job, but because it is needed to manage a classroom session successfully, even if the plans had been roughly produced by the teachers (for example, even if the plans were reduced to "work on page 28 of the text book"). For this reason, I suggest that those plans are the leading idea regarding the task towards which teachers aim, and so, that there is an intention underlying their actions. All in all, Sofía, Ricardo and Luisa have a purpose, a motive in principle, which is students' learning, regardless of whether deep down they passionately aim for that, or if it is only a requirement to receive a salary.

Sofía is surprised by Juan's joke and the class's energetic laughter; Ricardo, by Teresa's computer change of screen; and Luisa by Roberto's complaint about another teacher. Although all of them might be astounded to a certain extent, teachers respond to emergent surprises with different approaches. I relate their responses, however diverse,

to two different approaches to the navigation through the situated waters of their respective classes, if I continue to use Suchman's (1987) metaphor. Sofía has a goal, but she responds to the joke by laughing, to the big movements with big movements, to the challenge from Juan's joke by jokingly challenging his mistake in the way in which he puts the joke. In the excerpt in Chapter 6, we can see that she 'navigates the waters' flowing towards the goal, which is that students learn, but without a fixed route in between where they are and the destination port. For this reason, the class seem to sail adrift, but just for a short period.

By contrast, Ricardo and Luisa also have a goal, which is the same as Sofía's. However, for Ricardo the surprise represents an interruption to the expected itinerary. Ricardo expected to start the work with the content of the presentation after finishing his admonition to the group about how to behave in the media classroom. However, Teresa's change of screen came in the middle, as a disruption to Ricardo's plan and he got angry. Finally, Luisa also had an itinerary for her lesson, which she changed when she decided to talk to the group about the folder with the reports in the first instance, before beginning to work on the topic she had prepared for that lesson. However, she could not follow her new expected itinerary because Roberto challenged her and she was forced to reply. Both, Ricardo and Luisa were not happy with the change in their respective expected itineraries.

In both cases, Ricardo's and Luisa's, the data suggest that a sentiment of slight annoyance, possibly fearful or worrisome about the relationship with the student, was permeating the way in which Ricardo and Luisa were engaging in the classroom from the onset in the microsituations analysed, by insistently recommending students to behave appropriately

The three microsituations find a closure of the episode, which concludes in the resumption of the lesson and presumably a new re-engagement of the classes in their respective tasks. All things considered, the three microsituations illustrate Suchmann's (1987) reference to different approaches to navigation. Some teachers navigate by aiming to have a predefined route, while others have a clear idea of the final destination, but follow the meteorological conditions, the currents and even the attractive ports where they can land for a while to steer the boat of the class, if I may continue with the metaphor.

Having described the patterns in the microsituations, it is time to address the question about the patterns in the emergence of emotions. In the three microsituations, the emergence of emotions can be identified in any of the four stages presented, and the variations seems to be related to the concrete circumstances of participants' present time. Although the present might not appear as a part of history<sup>25</sup>, it is indeed a part of history, and this is particularly important in microhistorical analysis, because it is at this point in time when emotions play an important role. In the three excerpts, the emergence of emotions is acknowledged and responded to in performative terms by the participants. As pointed out in Chapter 7, emotions and responses to emotions are performed as part of practice. In historical terms a general point about emotions is that they emerge and become apparent at different points, whether enjoyment, excitement, anger or fear, all of them situate the participants in their present time because individuals engage with something concrete precisely as part of their participation in social practices. Participants engage in the here and now. We can see in the data the way in which emotions offer an anchor to individuals (teacher and students) and to the ensemble of participants (the whole class and their teacher), i.e. grounding in the situation. Students and Sofia laugh for different reasons, Ricardo or Luisa are annoyed or get angry, Teresa or Roberto get frustrated, some students feel fear, but all of them, for good or for bad, engage with the concrete situation.

In Sofia's lesson, student's laughter emerges after the surprise brought up by Juan. Students' laughter adds up to the surprise from Sofia's perspective. The empathetic and soft guidance of Sofia's navigation style follows a negotiated trajectory of the meteorological conditions of the class, and makes her position stronger as I underlined in Chapter 6. By contrast, teacher's anger, in Ricardo's and Luisa's classes is associated with frustration at a disruption to their plans as teachers. Interestingly, the two teachers seemed to follow a tighter navigation pattern in these microsituations. They use their anger to push for the resolution of the surprise, but their persuasive power is lost, and they need to resort to reprimands, and raising their voices or making scornful comments.

A suggestion of this analysis is that emotions do not play a specific role either as a cause (something that has an impact) or as a consequence (something that receives an impact of a particular situation or action) in microhistorical analysis. In Luisa's class,

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<sup>25</sup> As Victor Jara suggests in his song *I remember you Amanda*: "life is eternal in five minutes", which I interpret as the sensation of length experienced in the passionate engagement with present experience. Jara, V. (1974). *Te Recuerdo Amanda*. Santiago: Fonomusic.

her fear expressed in her hesitation while being challenged by a student is overcome by answering calmly and finally finding a point from which she restates her dominant position by suggesting that listening to little voices can be dangerous. The evidence presented suggests that the cause of the transformation of emotions does not originate in whatever triggers them, but in the fact that emotions are the result of a complex interplay between the situation in which they emerge and the negotiation of the future. Vygotsky (1997, 1999) underlines the complexity of psychological features: their function varies through time, either as a cause or as a consequence. Nonetheless, it is possible to point at them, even if we cannot cut them out from the context with a scalpel.

### ***Adolescents' negativity and negotiations***

In this section, I address the question, posed in Chapter 5: *Does adolescents' negativity and rebelliousness influence emotions in the classroom and vice versa?*

The fact that the study took place in secondary classrooms makes it necessary to discuss the negativity implied in adolescents' "rejection of the old" (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2008; Engeström, 1996). Indeed, as I have shown in the three microsituations analysed in the two previous chapters and this one, students bring surprises to the negotiations that take place in classrooms. These surprises are associated with adolescent rebelliousness. To address the question that leads this section, the issue at stake is the influence of rebelliousness on emotions and conversely if emotions influence rebelliousness.

The three excerpts presented so far have the similarity of presenting surprises brought about by students. Those surprises are neither accidental, nor uncommon. During my time of observation in the secondary school where I undertook my fieldwork, there were numerous occasions in which adolescent students made jokes, misbehaved (in the vocabulary of the school) or challenged their teachers, forcing them to renegotiate tasks and aims. Also, in the three microsituations, there is evidence that students whistle, hit their tables, laugh about the teacher or their classmates, and in general, engage in acts that challenge the situation in which they participate. As I discussed in the section above, this has an impact on emotions. On the other hand, these actions can be associated with emotions too.

Sofía, Ricardo and Luisa, as teachers, are challenged by students' surprises, as they are in charge of leading their respective classes. Students' rejection of the old is not clearly differentiated: is the rejection directed to the curriculum content, to the institution, to the

individual teacher, to the rules of behaviour in the classroom, to the power relations in the classroom, or to the physical setting? There are as many aspects to which the challenges could be attributed as there are aspects in which we can divide a description of the meaning of being in the classroom. Even more, adolescent rejection could be directed to a combination of factors. However, teachers have the responsibility to face adolescents' rejections and rebelliousness.

Rejection is generally not explicitly voiced, except by Roberto and his classmates in Luisa's class. Roberto openly challenges Luisa, voicing the opinion that "teachers are not fair", and "you never defend us". His tone and movements show annoyance, to the extent that he points at Luisa. There are, however, a number of other behaviours, listed above, that can also be associated with the same rejection of 'the old'. Either in an explicit or an implicit manner, students' questioning and rejection force their teachers to negotiate the tasks and their aims, and even the objective of schooling itself.

On the whole, in these situations, emotions work in different ways. They can be at the centre of what causes the disruption. For example when a student behaves inappropriately for the context, emotions may be the result of the disruption. In other cases, they are present in the paralysis in which there is almost an absence of movement. In spite of finding elements of rejection, it is certainly not the case that the students engage only in rejection, as there are also implicit acceptances of the leading role of teachers: finishing their laughter (in Sofía and Luisa's classes), remaining silent (in Ricardo's class or in the case of Roberto, when he loses the argument with Luisa), or laughing in favour of the teacher about Roberto's ineffective attempts to challenge Luisa. Additionally, certain emotions seem to be useful in maintaining the status quo, i.e. the situation as it is, such as Ricardo's or Luisa's anger. All in all, the value of emotions in changing or offering continuity depends on the position of the participants in the particular task, and the way in which they relate to each other.

### ***Emotional climate and possible futures***

In this section, I address the question posed in Chapter 5: *What are the consequences of the emotional climates or environments created in teachers' classes?* The issues involved in addressing this question are individual and collective learning, participation and diversity, and conflict resolution.

In relation to the future, emotions emerge not only as a response to the immediate situation, as I pointed out in Chapter 6, but their course is also determined by the negotiations that take place in relation to the implicit or explicit foreseen futures of the



situation. In microhistory, it is impossible to observe development or learning as such, because these two processes imply “significant and relatively long-term qualitative change in the way we relate to the world” (Engeström, 1996, p. 4). However, I have shown in these sections certain traces that could potentially be important to development in both senses: in terms of mastery and in terms of the destruction of old-style hierarchic approach to teaching and establishing teacher-student relations. An example of the former would be the understanding of Don Quixote and the willingness to discuss it by the students, for instance; examples of the latter are the challenge of teachers authority by bringing the *Cowboy Books* into the classroom or Roberto’s challenges to Luisa.

In order to observe both types of development and learning in their fullest, further processes of gaining awareness and self-awareness would need to be investigated to sustain that learning in a broader sense takes place (Engeström, 1996; Sherrod *et al.*, 2006). In any case, there are some clues that suggest two contradictory aspects of learning and development by the adolescents participating in the microsituations discussed. On the one hand, adolescents move in the direction of mastering elements of the pre-existing culture, when they get involved in the discussion of a classic book, Don Quixote, or accept defeat in a discussion when facing the power of the teacher. On the most positive side, students’ learning involves stopping laughing and returning to work, but at the same time accepting that laughter can be part of the process of working. This aspect of learning has to do with a continuity in terms of receiving cultural resources built by previous generations. On the other hand, adolescents move in the direction of change, through their inclusion of the *Cowboy Books* into the school context or their lack of conformity with the way in which teachers engage with them (as in Roberto’s case by not supporting them or being on their side when they have difficulties, as in the case of the broken measurement tape). It is of course, undefined, however, what the end result would be of these two antagonistic aspects of learning and development in their adult life. Nevertheless, all in all, emotions are a part of both collective repetitiveness, and of collective transformation.

Students’ challenges to the teachers and teachers’ abilities to engage with them are important for the transformation of the group environment and have a weight in collective transformation. As I suggested in Chapter 6, in a class certain emotional climates or environments are created. Because such construction is a process, in the

excerpts presented, particular clues about the ways in which collective change occurs can be identified.

In Sofía's microsituation, teacher and students work together. Her empathy, her patient accompaniment and her gentle approach to bringing the students back to work without openly challenging them creates an emotional structure that supports building bonds, fortifies the students' trust in the teacher, and in working together. By contrast in the other two microsituations, the teachers seem to work independently of the group, Ricardo's communication does not work to create bonds, and his anger with Teresa seems to create greater distance from the students. In a similar manner that is the way in which Luisa and her students operate, in spite of the supporting laughter of the allied students when she beats Roberto in their argument.

In the three classes, the analysis suggests that a collective learning is taking place in which a particular sense is built in relation to what it is to work together. Working together, however, is polysemic. On the one hand, it can be to have to work together in spite of it being a tight situation. On the other hand, in Sofia's microsituation a context is created in which teacher and students work together on the content and in relation to the goals suggested by the teacher, with contents, and ways of doing brought about by the students. As Engestrom (1996) suggests, they are crossing boundaries together with significant others. This transformation takes place in the locality of the class, independently of the fact that this might not have a clear foreseeable effect in other particular contexts built in the same school. This suggests a limitation of a microhistorical approach, as it is not possible to presume that this transformation could go outside this specific class.

Finally, whilst Sophia calms the students' laughter, Ricardo shouts at Teresa to pay attention, and Luisa transforms Roberto's comment into a ridiculous phrase. While teachers' plans aim to produce students' learning, the way in which the teachers respond to students' actions and emotions contributes to the construction of a path for the transformation of emotions for both teachers and students. Teachers' ways of facing students' actions, which include emotions and support participation, contribute to strengthening values for the acceptance of diversity. This creates a climate in which it is possible to work together and support a culture of care.

## Wrapping up

In this chapter, I argued that the present is not simply a linear unfolding from the past, but also a pulling towards the future, implicit in the motive of being in a classroom, which in turn is translated into the plans and goals brought about by the teacher. In order to support this argument, I presented a new data section with an excerpt and addressed the issue of the microhistory of emotions. I have discussed emotions from the perspective of microhistory and the role of emotions not only in a descriptive manner, but also in the roles that they play in emergent surprising situations, and in individual and collective development. In addressing this question, I have argued that the study of microhistory helps to identify patterns in relation to the emergence and transformation of emotions, as well as contradictions in the social relations that are associated with the developmental process of both adolescents and teachers who participate in the social practices analysed, particularly in relation to adolescent rebelliousness. Students' surprises then, also have an impact on the shaping of emotions, questioning the possibility of defining emotions as causes in a simplistic manner.

This pulling to the future implies intentions, which are negotiated with surprises brought up by students offering a path for particular emotions that emerge, change and fade away. Finally, I argued that the negotiations between students and their teacher offer different paths of collective transformations in particular classrooms, which may lead to different ways of doing things together.

In the study of the sequence of events in microhistory, I have analysed contradictions in the social relations associated with the developmental process of both adolescents and teachers who participate in social practices. I have done this in order to identify patterns in the transformation of emotions, associated with tensions between the weight of the past, the present situation and possible futures. Finally, I discussed the role of emotions in the collective transformation of the classroom and the impact of the climate or environment on the possibilities for the future.

## Chapter 9 – Here I am: Emotions in the Classroom

We use this expanded notion of Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development as well as some of his unfinished, yet seminal, work on emotions as a theoretical frame for exploring affective factors in learning. We also hope to illuminate the complexity of learning when thought, emotional experience, and practical action are brought together in the analysis.

(Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002, p. 47)

### Introduction

This is the discussion chapter. In it, I present a final microsituation. This can be slightly startling at this point, however, this final episode constitutes a useful example to come back to the original question that has led this research.

This last microsituation, presented in the first part of this chapter, shows a teacher offering support to a student who is embarrassed about reading his own text in front of the class. In the second part of the chapter I draw together the fieldwork in order to discuss its significance in relation to the initial research question, *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?*

### Here I am

In this video segment, I present a situation in which a student is embarrassed and his embarrassment becomes the centre of the teaching for a short period. Pilar, the teacher, addresses embarrassment straightforwardly, but simultaneously in a subtle way as we will see. I finish this section with a discussion of how dealing with a student's embarrassment becomes the centre and, to a certain extent, the goal of the task. The segment is 2 minutes and 2 seconds long. In Pilar's class, the quality of the videos is not as clear as those from which the microsituations presented in Chapters 6 and 7 were extracted.

Before presenting the excerpt, it is necessary to describe what is going on in the classroom. Pilar is teaching a first-year group. The teaching activity consists of reading aloud the end of a story that the students wrote as homework from a story that they had read in the previous lesson. At the point at which the excerpt starts, four students have already read their texts. I do not know the story, because I was not in the classroom during the previous lesson, but apparently the story had to do with a child, Dario, who had done something naughty and who was frequently beaten by his father. There are

murmurs from the students in the class. A boy has just told Pilar that he wanted to read, but then he said that he had not finished writing. This is when the excerpt begins.



**Figure 17. The Class: Pilar is standing up in the front of the classroom**

### *Who else wants to read?*

Pilar points with her pencil at Alvaro (lines 1 to 3), who is busy writing the end of his story, which he did not finish at home. There is a moment of silence (2 seconds, between line 5 and 7).

Pilar puts her right index finger up when she asks who wants to participate (lines 4 and 5). She emphasizes the question moving her arm up and down (blue arrow in lines 4 and 5), and then she waits for the answer (line 6). While the students in the second row look

1. **Pilar:** Let's see... while...
2. eer... he (referring to
3. Alvaro) finishes writing...



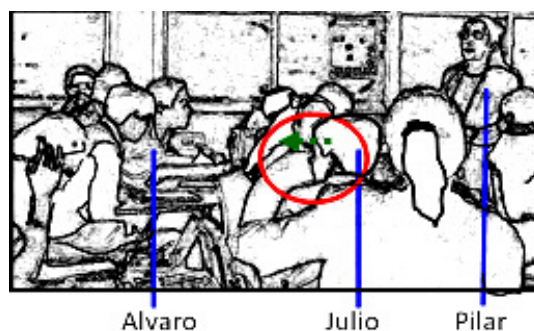
Alvaro Julio Pilar

4. **Pilar:** ... who else wants
5. to go to the front?



Alvaro Julio Pilar

6. **Boy x:** I do

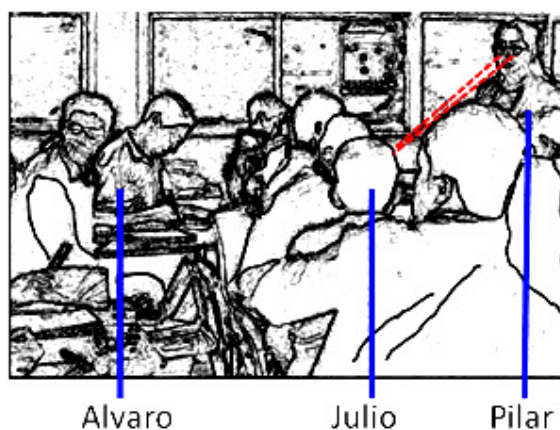


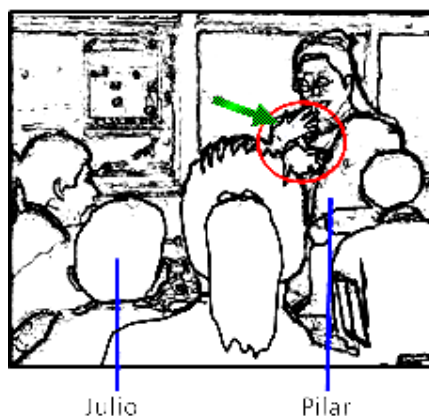
at Pilar, the students in the third row, towards whom she is looking, are looking down. It gives the impression that they do not want to go to the front of the class to read. Then the same students look at each other, making inaudible comments. Pilar stays still and observes for 2 seconds while the comments take place. Julio turns to the back to respond to one of these comments by the students in the third row (blue arrow in line 7). Also, the girl on Julio's right turns back and a boy answers 'I do' (line 7), but Pilar does not hear or ignores his voice.

### ***Julio***

Immediately after this, while looking at him, Pilar mentions Julio's name (line 8). Then she points to the front of the classroom with the whole hand, meaning 'go to the front' (figure 2).

7. **Pilar:** ... Julio...



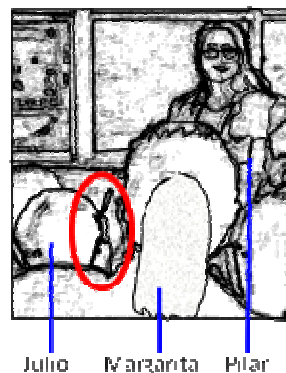


**Figure 18. Pilar points with her hand to the front of the classroom**

### *Negotiating going to the front of the class*

There is a negotiation going on that is inaudible on the tape at this point (line 8 and figure 2). Julio does not want to go to the front as it will become clear in the following lines.

8. **Julio:** (inaudible)... it's because... (inaudible)



9. **Leticia:** ---I also felt... embarrassed... didn't you?  
10. **Pilar:** ---go to the front of the class... Go!



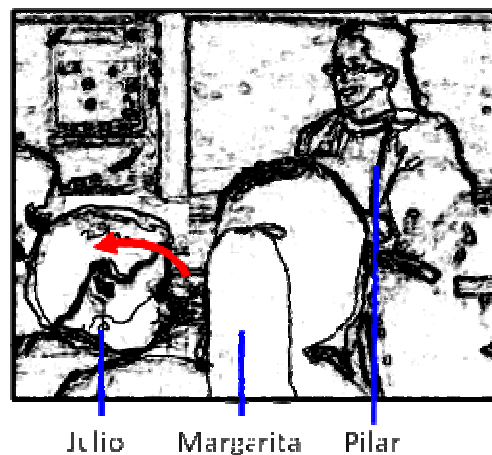
Julio leans forward, and holding a pencil, he takes his right hand to his face (line 8:). Leticia (figure 3, taken from the 'shot' of the whole group in figure 1) possibly after listening to what Julio says, mentions her feelings of embarrassment when she took her turn to read (line 9). She is a very participative and expressive student. Her comment, to a girl next to her, is recorded as she is close to the camera, and it is out of reach of

Pilar's ear. Leticia was one of the first students who went to the front and read; however she did not show apparent embarrassment in spite of her assertion. Leticia's comment overlaps with Pilar's insistence that Julio should go to the front. Pilar moves up her left hand facing up, and then she moves it to her left, towards the front of the classroom (red arrow, lines 11 and 14).



**Figure 19.** Leticia (taken from the shot of the whole group in figure 1)

- 11. **Boy y:** Can I go to the toilet?
- 12. **Pilar:** ... leave it... (not clear to whom she
- 13. talks to) no... you do not go until
- 14. you have finished (inaudible)



Then there is a 'gap' in the conversation between Pilar and Julio of about 10 seconds (lines 11 to 17). During this time, the students talk to each other and Julio looks at his notebook. Pilar also seems distracted from the conversation with Julio and looks at the papers she has in her hand (line 13 – but image not included). She also talks to two other students (lines 12 to 14). Julio stays seated, while looking at his notebook and he leans his head to his left. The pace at which things happen is slow. Then Pilar looks down at something that might be on the floor close to her. Julio speaks briefly to Margarita, the girl with the pony tail seated next to him.



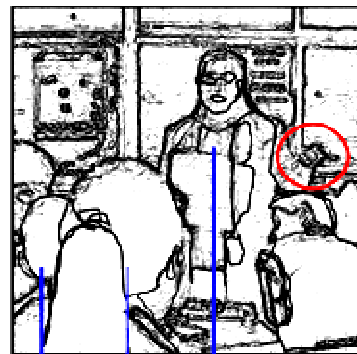
15. **Girl x:** ---If she asks me, tell her that I do not want to read...  
 16. **Student x:** ---miss...  
 17. **Student y:** ---me! me!



Pilar

Other voices are prominent in the recording. A girl close to the camera tells the girl seated next to her that she does not want to read (line 15). One student calls Pilar (line 16); another student tries to call Pilar's attention in order to be allowed to go to the front and read (line 17). After looking at her papers, Pilar looks at Julio again, and pointing to the front of the classroom for the third time, she 'invites' or 'instructs' him to go to the front (line 18).

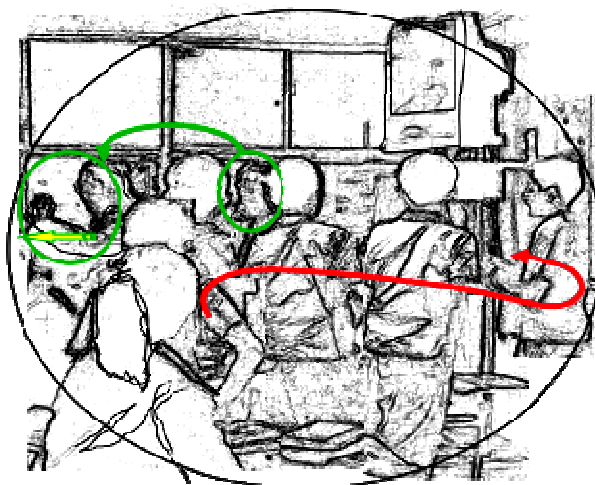
18. **Pilar:** let's see... Julio



Julio Margarita Pilar

Finally, Julio stands up by pushing himself up with his left arm on the chair and his right hand on the table of his chair. He goes to the front (red arrow in figure 4). While he walks some voices among the murmurs are distinguished (lines 19 and 21). Pilar says something (?) to the first student, and then she walks to the back (yellow/green arrow in figure 4). When a student asks her for permission to go to the toilet, she puts her hand up as making the sign 'stop' (figure 4, left side). Finally, Julio is at the front of the classroom.

19. **Boy n:** ... Me... me....  
 20. **Pilar:** Wait a second ('ahorita')  
 21. **Boy m:** ---teacher, can I go to the toilet?  
 22. **Pilar:** No

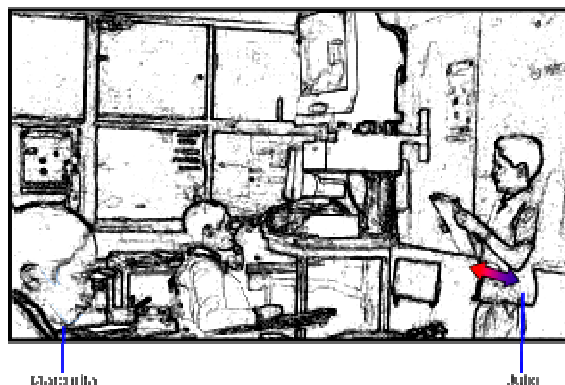


**Figure 20. Julio goes to the front, then Pilar starts walking to the back.**

### *Reading aloud*

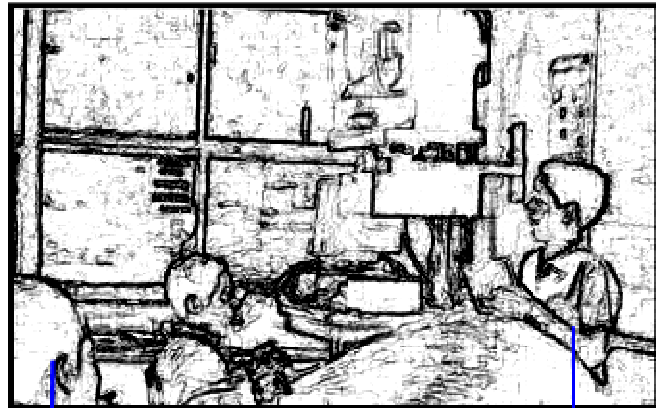
Julio has hardly reached the front and struggles to stand up straight and face the group when he starts reading. He reads quickly and in very low volume so his reading is not audible to anyone. While he reads, he balances quickly from one side to the other by changing his weight alternatively between his feet. On her way back, Pilar is still interacting with other students and some of this interactions are audible (lines 23 to 25). He finishes reading and looks to the back (towards the teacher), while he starts walking to his seat. Pilar, from the back of the classroom and unaware of Julio's' reading and ending, talks to him (lines 27 and 28).

23. **Pilar:** ... no... let's see... we  
 24. have... other... two  
 25. classmates...  
 26. **Boy p:** ---... teacher...  
 27. **Pilar:** Julio... high volume,  
 28. please



Julio looks at the teacher smiling (line 29).

29. **Julio:** I read it...

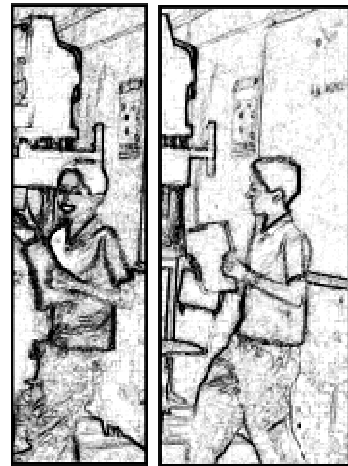


Margarita

Julio

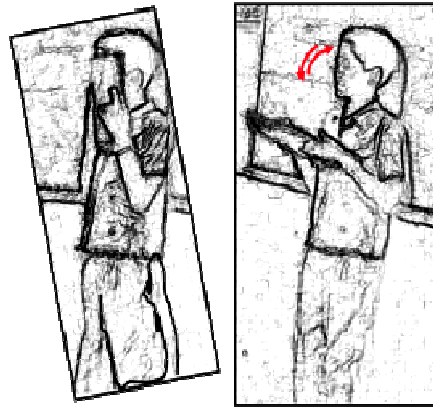
He walks backwards towards the whiteboard. On his way back, his eyes travel to the side where the camera is. He is smiling, and he repeats that he read his homework already (line 30).

30. **Julio:** ... I read it



He arrives close to the whiteboard and stands up with his legs apart. He is listening to what the teacher is telling him (line 30). He arrives, moving backwards, at the whiteboard and he covers his face with the notebook while the teacher speaks (lines 31 to 33).

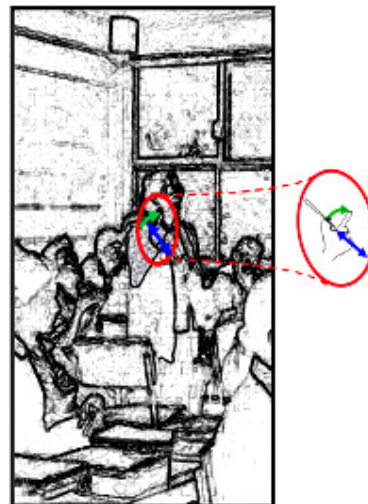
31. **Pilar:** ... no... no... you  
 32. cannot read if they are  
 33. not paying attention...



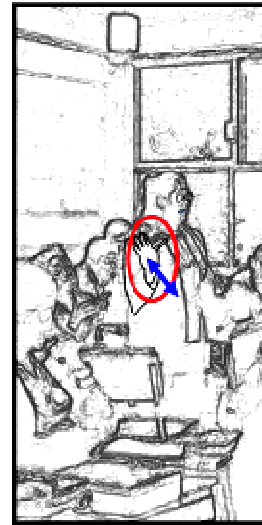
Julio covers his face with the notebook and then he smiles and looks at the teacher, at his notebook and then at the teacher again. I do a panning with the camera to 'look' at the teacher and the students look 'distracted', looking at their notebooks and talking among themselves, and murmuring can clearly be heard in the video.

Pilar explains to Julio what he has to do (lines 34 to 37). All her speech is very calm in contrast with Julio's fast movements. She moves her right hand rhythmically, accompanying her words (blue arrows in lines 34 to 37). First, it is her fist that she moves with the back of the hand towards Julio; then, she opens her index finger and thumb simultaneously to the word 'attention' (green arrows in coincidence with line 36). Then she opens her hand while looking towards Julio (line 38).

34. **Pilar:** ... first... you have to  
 35. stand up well and attract  
 36. the attention of the  
 37. public...



38. **Pilar :** ... let's see... when you  
39. see them already in  
40. silence...



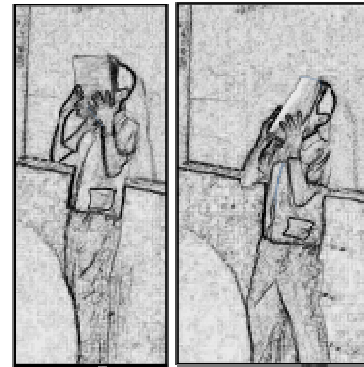
Finally, Pilar closes her fingers in a 'soft' fist and moves her hand down to emphasize the word 'start' (she does not use the pronoun 'you', as it is not necessary in Spanish, so the movement of her hand is in coincidence with the start of line 41).

41. **Pilar:** ... you start to read...



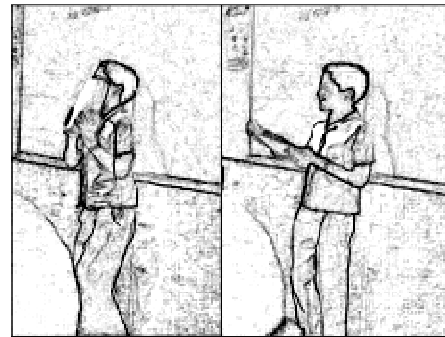
Pilar interacts with a student at the back, but her dialogue is inaudible apart for a few words (line 42). Simultaneously, Julio's embarrassment continues, and he uses an expression to challenge his classmates for looking at him, because he does not want to be seen (lines 43 and 44). However, he does not really challenge them, because immediately following his expression Julio covers his face with his notebook while he opens his legs (line 44) and produces a sound with his right foot slapping on the floor after the last word (line 44). He walks to his right side and leans on the whiteboard. A girl laughs noisily. There is a comic character to these actions, which explains why Julio's classmates laugh.

42. **Pilar:** (inaudible)... ---well... yes... (inaudible)  
 43. **Julio:** ---oh, what are you  
 44. looking at?!



Julio 'falls' backwards, leaning on the whiteboard and attempting to answer, but he cannot articulate a sentence (line 47), while a boy is talking to the teacher (lines 45 and 46), Julio covers his face for a longer period with his book, stops, and then covers his face again. Meanwhile, Pilar replies to the boy who offered to read that he has to wait (lines 48 and 49).

45. **Boy?:** ... teacher... I can read...  
 46. send me to the front...  
 47. **Julio:** ---... no... it's... ops...  
 48. **Pilar:** ---wait please (talking  
 49. to the other student)



Then, Julio bounces his body forwards and backwards, standing alternatively on his heels and his whole feet, and at some point he slightly turns his body, and hits his back against the whiteboard (lines 50 and 51). All this time, Julio is smiling, and there is some playful character to this actions together with the embarrassment.

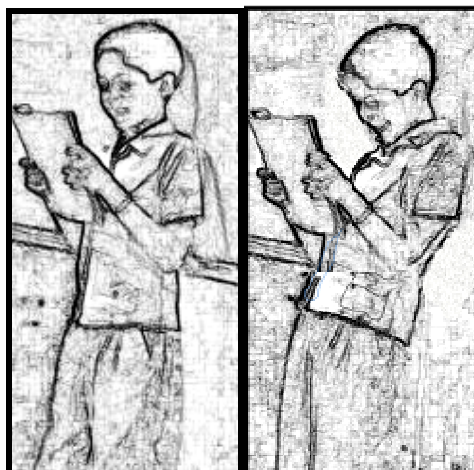
50. **Pilar:** ---wait please (talking to the other student)  
 51. **Julio:** ---oops...



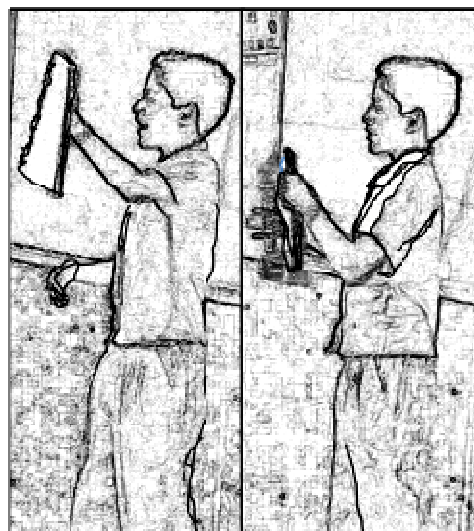
Then he moves his notebook up and down slightly and finally he looks at his notebook as if he were in control of the situation for a second, and he looks as if he were going to

start reading. However, he still cannot read (line 52) and at this point a boy shouts that Julio had not done his homework (line 53).

52. **Julio:** Err...  
53. **Boy?:** ---he did not do it!

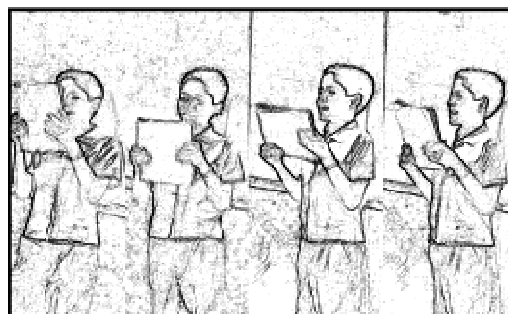


54. **Julio:** Yes, I did it ... look...  
55. look



With his left hand, Julio shows his notebook to the boy who challenged him (lines 54 to 55). Then Julio holds the notebook again with both hands and finally, he starts reading (lines 56 to 60). He reads turning from right to left repetitively, decreasing his volume gradually (lines 56 to 60).

56. **Julio:** (reading) *His father arrived*  
57. *and told him off, and after*  
58. *a long talk, everything was*  
59. *arranged with Teresa...*  
60. *Rafael* (inaudible)...



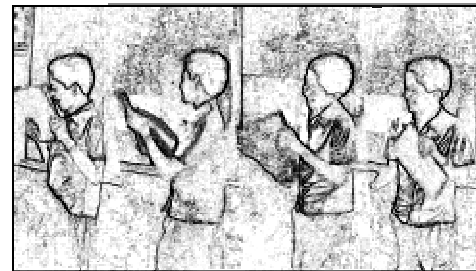
A girl interrupts Julio's reading (line 61), and her voice seems to be Leticia's (figure 3, above). In fact, that is what makes Julio's reading inaudible.

61. **Girl?:** ---teacher... it is it is not understandable...  
 62. **Pilar:** let's see, Julio...  
 63. **Julio:** ---ops!, no...  
 64. **Girl?:** ... he reads too quickly...  
 65. **Pilar:** ... slowly, Julio



Julio continues reading inaudibly while the girl speaks (line 61) and until the teacher speaks to him. Julio covers his face again with the notebook and lets himself 'fall' on the whiteboard behind, curving his upper back (line 63). Julio continues with his face covered (line 65).

66. **Pilar:** ... let's go, Julio... you *can*... go  
 67. on! (with a firm voice)... more  
 68. slowly...



Julio is smiling nervously. He moves quickly while the teacher speaks (lines 66 to 68) and Pilar is trying to encourage him, emphasising the word 'can' (line 66). In the meantime, Julio moves from side to side quickly and opens and closes his mouth twice, turning mainly towards his right and walking laterally in that direction (the opposite side to where the camera is). Moving his notebook close to him, Julio covers his face. At some point it seems that he is covering his face from the camera (last image in lines 66 to 69), which is possibly because this is one of the first sessions in which the camera is in the classroom. All this time, he looks alternately at his notebook and to the teacher. Now, Julio reads again (line 69). He takes his notebook with both hands and starts turning to the sides; apparently, Julio makes a mistake and turns to his left covering his face briefly (line 70).



69. **Julio:** (reading)... *and then*



70. **Julio:** ... oops!...



He then reads very quickly hitting rhythmically his back against the whiteboard (lines 71 to 77). When he reads the last sentence ‘and they were happy forever’ (lines 78 and 79), he puts his notebook on his left shoulder and scratches his nose, while looking at Pilar.

71. Julio: ... *his father arrived*  
 72. *and told him off, and*  
 73. *after a long talk,*  
 74. *everything was*  
 75. *arranged with*  
 76. *Teresa... Rafael*  
 77. *also (inaudible)*  
 78. *and they were happy*  
 79. *forever.*



The same girl shouts ‘what?’ (line 80) with which she implies that what Julio’s reading is not well done. Some students clap, which is a ‘tradition’ in this group for this kind of activity. Julio folds his notebook vertically covering his mouth and nose and then slips it down putting the edge underneath his upper lip. Julio waits for feedback, and Pilar starts talking (lines 82 and 83).

80. **Girl3:** what?  
 81. Some students clap.  
 82. **Student q:** (inaudible)  
 83. **Pilar:** ... let’s see... er... Julio...



## *Giving/receiving advice*

Julio walks towards his chair.

84. **Julio:** eh?  
85. **Pilar:** ... look... you have to  
86. be more confident ...  
87. when you go to the  
88. front to read your...  
89. work...



Pilar looks at Julio while she speaks (lines 84 to 89). As she is at the back of the classroom some students turn to see her. Her suggestion to Julio becomes some sort of instruction about what to do when one needs to read in front of a class.

90. **Alvaro**<sup>26</sup>: ... me, teacher, me...  
91. **Pilar:** shhh (to Alvaro)... I know  
92. that... some of you feel  
93. embarrassed... feel  
94. nervous...



95. **Pilar:** ... but here I am...  
96. to calm down your  
97. classmates...  
98. try to read with  
99. more calm...  
100. Let's see... who  
101. else...



The murmurs continue. Although nobody else is looking at Pilar, Julio is looking at her. Pilar wants to say something to Julio and she requests that Alvaro keeps quiet (line 91).

<sup>26</sup> Alvaro is the boy that is finishing writing at the beginning of this excerpt (lines 1 to 3).

It is necessary to remark on three points about what Pilar says to Alvaro. Firstly, she does not say “I know that you feel embarrassed”, she uses the plural and diffuse “some of you feel embarrassed” (lines 92 and 93), making the reference to Julio’s embarrassment slightly indirect by implying that it is not a singular issue, but something shared by others. Secondly, in spite of this indirect reference to Julio’s embarrassment, she immediately changes the word ‘embarrassed’ to ‘nervous’ (lines 93 and 94). Thirdly, in Pilar’s mention of her support to him (line 95), she indicates that the purpose of her support in the situation is “to calm down your classmates” (96 and 97). Otherwise, ‘to be there for him’ could sound too sentimental or twee.

Finally, it is important to underline the contrast between Pilar’s and Julio’s pace (line 90 to 100). She speaks calmly, marking her words with a rhythmic movement of her right hand, first facing up (lines 90 to 93), moving it to the side, then facing down (lines 94 to 98). In contrast, Julio moves rapidly, playing with his notebook, while turning from side to side (lines 94 to 98). Finally, he closes his notebook (lines 100 and 101). The difficult moment for him came to an end.

### ***Embarrassment during the lesson***

In the context of Pilar’s lesson, she deals with Julio’s embarrassment, which she accepts as it happens. First, Pilar, patiently but in a determined manner, presses Julio to go to the front of the class, although he initially states that he does not want to read. During this period, she enters in a cycle of insisting and waiting, until he finally goes to the front of the class. Later, when Julio is at the front she pushes and encourages him to do the task in an appropriate way, when she does not accept that he had already read while she was walking to the back of the classroom. Patiently and calmly, Pilar makes the group persist in the task by stopping interruptions and not allowing them to go out of the classroom, so that Julio is able to do what he is supposed to do: i.e. read. During this time, instead of starting to read immediately, Julio takes his time and laughs nervously, covers his face with his notebook repeatedly, moving rhythmically and finally he reads. The rest of the students are very active during the period depicted in the microsituation: they tease Julio and interact with him, they laugh and clap. The pressure of the girl (apparently Leticia) contributed a lot to increase Julio’s difficulties at undertaking the task, as she was influential in Pilar’s intervention about Julio’s performance. Interestingly, Pilar does not only take this pressure to stop Julio’s reading, but she takes it as a key for addressing the quality of the work that he has to achieve. In this sense, Pilar sustains Julio while he is embarrassed and supports the group to stay engaged in the task.

## **Emotions: teaching and teachers**

In this section, I address the concept of ZPD in the classroom, because I argue that teachers teach their students how to work through emotions, i.e. what is acceptable and what is not and what to do to rise to the challenge that participation in the classroom represents, which involves their learning as the motive. Teaching takes place in addition to the teaching of curriculum content. However, I also discuss teaching and learning about curriculum content. Finally I discuss the implicit presence of emotions in teachers' knowledge.

### ***Teaching how to deal with emotions***

In the four excerpts presented in the previous three chapters and in this one, I have shown how emotions neither emerge nor freely change over time according to a predefined (presumably physiological) mechanism independent of the participation in the practices that take place in classrooms. On the contrary, emotions are bound to the situation. Pleasure of laughter, anger, fear or embarrassment are influenced in their emergence and transformation by the fact that they occur in the classroom. Regarding emotions, although they are not explicit in the curriculum, teachers teach what to do with emotions implicitly or explicitly, if we examine the four excerpts in detail.

Pilar shows and tells Julio how to deal with embarrassment in front of the class, while regarding a text written by him. First of all, it in her final speech, she acknowledges embarrassment or nervousness as something that is not an exclusive issue for Julio: "... I know that... some of you feel embarrassed... feel nervous...". She gives him suggestions: "try to read with more calm...", and offers to help: "here I am... to calm down your classmates...". However, her teaching about embarrassment is not reduced to telling him what to do, she shows him what to do, with her calm voice and slow and emphatic movements. She teaches about embarrassment both in an implicit and explicit manner.

Sofía teaches about the place that enjoyment and laughter can have at work, as she tells some things, first to Juan in terms of what a good joke is, as it needs to fit in with the format of the response expected: "... he should have said ...truth... no, teacher, he read *Cowboy Books*"; and then to the group: "... be smart (or ready, 'listos' has both meanings)... will you?". In addition, she implicitly shows that enjoyment and laughter are acceptable, even with noise and with big movements, but she also shows when to stop, while waiting for them holding her hands together. Eventually, she leads the group

to return to work and leave the joke and the laughter behind: “Let’s see... err... who wants to give me the right answer?”, and then through a pat on the arm, she encourages Rubén to participate and with the IRF pattern she acknowledges the group effort.

Both Pilar and Sofía have been teaching how to deal with emotions in the classrooms, through verbal and physical empathetic responses to emotions. They have also modelled behaviours and expressively offered explicit suggestions about how to deal with emotions. In the case of Pilar, she allowed Julio the opportunity to overcome his embarrassment although this was not an explicit learning aim. However, it is part of the task structure, which might sound like a truism, because it is relatively common to have to learn how to deal with embarrassment in social situations.

We might wonder if Ricardo and Luisa are also teaching how to deal with emotions as neither of them supports the students in dealing with their emotions, as in the case of Sofía and Pilar. Let’s start with Luisa who talks about annoyance. The challenge for her was major, indeed, and the way she responds implies a level of defensiveness which she resolves by transforming Roberto’s word into a ridiculous expression in order to win the argument. In Ricardo’s class, the emotion was mainly his emotion, which was annoyance when warning the students to behave and slightly threatening of holding them out of the classroom, with his finger up. Also, we found Ricardo’s anger at the change of screen on one of the computers, which presumably, in his view, was moved intentionally. His teaching was implicit, showing some annoyance by warning the students about their behaviour, as well as his angry scolding: “... Teresa, pay attention to the indication!”. Potentially, I presume that the students might be learning about emotions in unequal relationships, and how to control their fear, and keep silent when experiencing frustration.

All in all, the data suggest that there are different types of teaching, and very importantly, teaching and learning about how to deal with emotions take place in the classroom<sup>27</sup>. It is interesting to underline that the data show that, when Sofía and Pilar accept the presence of emotions, deal with them as they come up, work through them with the students, and allow emotions to become a valid issue or even a topic, they are able to resolve the situation and to help students to focus on the task. By contrast, when the ‘surprise’ brought up by the students, or students’ emotions cannot be accepted, then

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<sup>27</sup> Emotions enter classrooms independently of the claims that emotions have either to be left out of the classroom objectives, or if they come in, they have to do it in special spaces created for emotions to develop, such as Social and Emotional Learning activities.

emotions are not resolved, and they may be actually heightened, as in the case of Roberto in Luisa's class, or Teresa in Ricardo's class.

### ***Teaching and learning with the support of emotions***

In Pilar's and Sofía's lessons, we have evidence of learning in relation to literacy in the Spanish class. This is not evidence of long-term learning, but students participate in a different manner throughout the short periods of the microsituations. Julio is able to read aloud in front of the class with the support offered by Pilar, while at the beginning he was unable to do it. Reading our own texts aloud in front of the class is not a technical skill, but a process that also involves overcoming embarrassment in order to do it in an appropriate manner.

Similarly, in Sofía's class, students could control their laughter after Juan's joke and engage in the task. Discussing the content of Don Quixote involves self-regulation and focused concentration on the task. Literacy development in the Spanish class involves the teachers working with their own and students' emotions and teaching students how to work through their emotions. Teaching and learning in the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1987), entails simultaneously a conceptual and an emotional engagement.

It can be presumed that Ricardo's and Luisa's ways of dealing with emotions in the microsituations presented create discomfort for individual students and a difficult climate in the classroom, which may have an effect on individual and group learning, as I discuss in the following section.

### ***Teachers' practical knowledge***

On the other hand, I argue that the way in which teachers deal with emotions is part of their knowledge embedded in practice, and thus teachers' pedagogies, as social practices, involve and are structured by emotions. I concentrate particularly on the issues involved in: the planning and execution of lessons, supporting and empowering students' learning and teachers' presence. Also, in this section, I discuss the implications of this knowledge for individual learning and collective learning through the construction of different ways of working together with students.

In the previous chapter, regarding planning, I pointed to the fact that there is a distance in the approach to the lessons that teachers and students hold. On the one hand, teachers plan their lessons; on the other hand, the ways in which students participate in lessons is mostly improvised and an *ad-hoc* process. Also, of course, teachers do not 'perform'

two lessons in the same way either, but in the case of students, and particularly adolescent students, I pointed to the fact that they surprise both their peers and their teachers. However, those surprises challenge teachers, as they need to deal with them. Although this is a truism, it is important to acknowledge that each lesson is distinctive then, and that teaching consists of responding to whatever happens in the context of the classroom. The teacher's lesson plans, which constitute the leading idea of the pedagogic tasks in which the teachers aim for students to engage, need to be worked out in relation to this unfolding and emerging context (which reminds us, as I suggested in the previous chapter, of Suchman's (1987) work,).

I also suggested above that teachers' responses in the excerpts can be classified into two types according to the way in which they respond to emergent surprises. In the new excerpt presented in this chapter, Pilar responds to the surprise that Julio's embarrassment brings to the task. As I pointed out above, both Sofía and Pilar accompany students' emotions and support them in how to deal with those emotions. By contrast, Ricardo and Luisa question students' behaviour, and interestingly they are caught into confrontation with them. Students' surprises have the effect of being disruptions and interruptions to their itineraries.

I infer that there is a practical knowledge involved in these two different approaches to leading lessons, and the data suggest that there is some sort of confidence, either in teachers' own knowledge, or in the process that teaching adolescents involves. Ricardo and Luisa warn and slightly threaten the students, which suggests a certain worry or even fear that students will not respond and grow to the situation of working on what they are supposed to. Sofía and Pilar, by contrast, show some confidence: Sofía laughs about the joke and laughing helps her to take the lead; Pilar supports Julio in the task he is requested to undertake in spite of the pressure from many students to read themselves, to go to the toilet and to criticise Julio's performance.

Regarding support and empowerment of students' learning, teachers can also be classified in two groups. Ricardo and Luisa act defensively and put pressure on the students by slightly threatening them, discarding what they say, and trying to force them to act in a particular manner. By contrast, Sofía and Pilar encourage Rubén to answer and Julio to read, respectively. They also put pressure on the students, but this pressure has an effect of empowering them. Rubén answers the question, even if his answer is wrong, and Julio reads his text. This difference suggests a practical knowledge that Sofía and Pilar seem to have mastered, linked to relations and negotiations with

adolescents. This knowledge involves both skills and a disposition to engage in dialogue as well as to encourage active participation.

Sofía and Pilar do not confront but receive or accept students' emotions. They patiently wait and gently push toward the realisation of the task suggested. They build a relationship of '*us*' in the way in which they organise their work in the microsituations presented. This practical knowledge is embedded in the way in which they participate in the classroom. For these two teachers working through emotions is part of their teaching practice, and so their practical knowledge.

The final aspect that I would like to discuss is teachers' presence. Sofía can laugh with her class, and Pilar create a safe environment for Julio to explore his embarrassment and then read. The overall presence of teachers, 'Here I am', with regards to their students implies additional practical knowledge, apart from confidence and self empowerment, which is their disposition to learn. As a consequence, the way in which teachers face emergent events and emotionally engage with students contributes to the creation of a particular 'environment'. This is to say that the nuances of how teachers respond and act in the classroom have an important bearing on how the setting develops. In turn, this has consequences for students' learning, group learning, in terms of the ways of working together, and for teachers' learning.

## **Addressing the research question**

In the second part of this chapter, I address the question originally posed, which has been the leading motive for this research: *How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?* To do this, I first gather together all the elements discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, and in the first part of this chapter in relation to the analysis of emotions in the classroom. Following this, I address the question as such.

### ***Emotions in the classroom***

In this section I make an inventory of the findings discussed in the analysis of the four microsituations presented above in order to summarise what sociocultural theory has allowed us to understand in relation to emotions in the classroom.

In the classroom, emotions cannot be separated as such from the ongoing situations in which they take place. Indeed, emotions emerge and develop in a particular way related



to the objective of being in a classroom, which in principle is students' learning. Emotions are also linked to the negotiations that take place in the classroom context regarding the goals of the tasks, the use of particular artefacts, and the relations established among people, including power relations. In brief, the course of emotions is shaped by the classroom context in which artefacts, rules and division of labour converge. Through observation, it is possible to identify emotions in the classroom, but it is not possible to cut them out, and fully isolate their emergence and transformation from that context.

Emotions are shaped through the participation in practices and the interactions embedded in those practices, and they are actively played out (as behaviours, and so *via* their externalisation). In this process, emotions are attributed a sense in the situation, and their appropriateness is shaped socially and locally. Laughter, anger, fear or embarrassment can be appropriate in one class, but not in another one; they can be appropriate at one point in time, but not at another one. The decision of whether an emotion is appropriate or not and how it can/ought to be transformed is built in the context in which it emerges. Therefore, the emergence and transformation of emotions is situated. Body and mind, i.e. the sense attributed to body and body movements, come together. This sense, however, is built in complex ways, as it involves actions and operations, as well as language. Regarding externalisation of emotions as behaviours, externalisation is only separated from the processes of internalisation for analytical purposes, because behaviours have a dual effect towards the social context in which an individual participates and towards individuals themselves. Behaviours in this sense constitute an important element of life experiences.

Emotions are not only associated with communication among participants in classroom practice, but also with artefacts that are part of such a practice, with the concrete circumstances in which the tasks take place, with the goals of the task and with the object of the activity. Emotions are important in the experiences in relation to tools and resources including books, texts or computers, for example. Students learn the value of a classic book or the use of computers through an emotional engagement with that tool. The concrete circumstances have to do with rules and division of labour. The way in which certain emotions are defined as accepted or not, or who is allowed to engage in pleasurable laughter, fear, anger or embarrassment is important to the emergence and transformation of emotions. Goals of the task and object of the activity are important in

the emergence and transformation of emotions. For example, laughter cannot last for long; anger can help push towards the goal and, in turn, towards the object.

In classrooms, emotions are not always functional to the motive, which is students' learning. In the case of adolescent students, through surprising actions, there is an implicit unspecific questioning of the status quo (which involves curriculum content, organisation of tasks, relationships among peers, power and care relationships with teachers, goals and objectives, and so forth, or even combinations of these elements. Therefore, emotions, as the mechanism of engagement with the ongoing situation, cannot, in the case of educational contexts, be reduced to 'motivation' towards learning because the possible engagements are multiple.

Emotions are sometimes the spark that ignites a particular negotiation or task in a classroom, and sometimes emotions are the result of a negotiation or task. Annoyance can lead to an argument; laughter to contagious laughter, embarrassment to a slow process of supporting a student to overcome such an emotion. On the other hand, sometimes, emotions are the result or consequence: anger can emerge as a response to a challenge or fear as a response to something that seems threatening in the situation, such as teacher's anger. Also, emotions are linked in different ways to repetition and change. Sometimes emotions support things to happen as they are conventionally supposed to happen, as when students stop laughing after the teacher asks them to do so, either with a smile or with annoyance. On other occasions, by contrast, emotions support a change in the relations, as when laughter moves the rules of the classroom, allowing the space for pleasure as part of working together.

Emotions are present in classrooms, and they are socially mediated in the *zone of proximal development* both for individual students and for classes. Teachers have an important role in relation to emotions in the classroom as they accompany, encourage and contain or regulate emotions as part the interactions that take place in classrooms. Moreover, teachers teach how to deal with emotions: what to do, what not to do, whether they accept or not the presence of emotions in the classroom. Furthermore, emotions are intertwined with students' learning, as the microsituations analysed show. Finally, the data suggest that working through emotions is part of teachers' practical knowledge. As a consequence, teachers are able to facilitate different emotional climates, and contribute to the opening of different possible futures.

### ***A sociocultural perspective for the study of emotions in the classroom***

At this point, I have all the elements together in order to address my original question:  
*How does sociocultural theory help to understand emotions in the classroom?*

In the previous section, I have shown that a sociocultural approach has demonstrated its usefulness to build a rich understanding of emotions in the classroom, based on the premise that emotions cannot be attributed either to individuals or to the social sphere only. The definition of emotions, as the affect involved in human participation in social practices, has been shown to offer a comprehensive understanding of emotions in the classroom. Emotions are not only relational features of human communication, established among teachers and their students; emotions are not only related to motivation. In this wider approach to the understanding of human beings, the study of emotions needs to be positioned in relation to humans living in the world, which consists of their whole active participation in a social life that transforms (humanises) such a world, including human beings themselves. Emotions represent the involvement of human beings in the entirety of their doings. Due to this comprehensive approach, it is possible to capture how teachers and students live emotions at each point in the microhistories that develop at the level of their everyday life in the classroom.

As a result, the attribution of emotions to individuals in psychology, outside their participation in social practices, has proved to be limited. From a sociocultural approach, it is possible to respond to both the somatic marker hypothesis (Damasio, 1994) and to philosophical cognitivism (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005). Conversely, in relation to what a sociology of emotions has studied (Williams and Bendelow, 1998a), a sociocultural approach captures the social character of emotions together with an understanding of individual experience in the participation in social life<sup>28</sup>. Accordingly, this perspective is able to show the challenge that working through emotions represents for both teachers and their students, as well as the importance of considering emotions in the teaching and learning activities that take place in contemporary classrooms.

On account of a non-dualistic approach that a sociocultural approach represents, the study of emotions in classrooms makes it possible to portray the role of emotions in supporting participation, understanding and strengthening the acceptance of diversity, supporting ways of working together and developing values associated with community

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<sup>28</sup> I will come back to a discussion about psychological and sociological perspectives in the study of emotions in Chapter 10.

building and care. All things considered, a sociocultural approach has shown to what extent emotions are a nuclear part of the life in classrooms.

### **Wrapping up**

In this chapter, I presented a final microsituation, and through a discussion of the data analysis of the previous chapters I argued that teachers teach emotions, either in an explicit or an implicit manner, that emotions are involved in the processes of teaching and learning curricular content, and that teachers' practical knowledge includes emotions. Thanks to all these elements, I argue, teachers facilitate the creation of ways of working together with their students. Additionally, in the second part of the chapter, I addressed the leading question of this study and showed how a sociocultural perspective contributes to the study of emotions.

## Chapter 10: Reflections on the study

Not all those who wander are lost.

–J. R. R. Tolkien (19). *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1954

### Introduction

This final chapter reflects on what this study has achieved and its limitations. The chapter comprises three sections. In the first one, I come back to the scholarly debates about the study that I presented in the literature review, in order to ponder the contribution of a sociocultural study of emotions. Those debates emerge in the fields of psychology and sociology of emotions. Then, I discuss the implications of my research in three aspects: for pedagogical practices, for the study of educational research and for research on emotions in wider terms. Afterwards, I discuss some of the limitations of this study. Finally, I present a brief personal note.

### Scholarly debates about emotions

In this section I return to some of the key literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3, in order to show how this inquiry extends the possibilities offered by other approaches in order to investigate emotions in the classroom. I will start with psychology, as a sociocultural approach is part of psychology.

#### *Emotions in psychology*

In Chapter 3, I discussed the study of emotions in psychology. In this section, I return to some of the literature presented to ponder what a sociocultural perspective has offered for the study of emotions in the classroom.

If emotions were defined at a physiological level only, in direct correlation and continuity to animal emotions (Lazarus, 2006), the variation of the way in which emotions emerge and are transformed by cultures, and concretely in the classroom contexts, would be difficult to explain. Cannon's (1927/1987) findings pointed to the fact that peripheral changes, such as heartbeat or breath were similar in different emotions. He could not explain how this happened. Later developments (such as Lazarus, 2006 and Panksepp, 2005), have continued studying emotions on the basis of their continuity with animal emotions. In my study, with the support of a sociocultural perspective, I have shown that the sense of emotions is constructed in the social realm, through participation in social practices, specifically through participation in the classroom context. If emotions are "states of bodily arousal... detected by the brain as

affect” (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005), the experience of such a detection, and the sense built around it is socially constructed, as the evidence of this study suggests. According to my findings, it would be impossible to define a clear separation between the changes in the body and the particular meaning of emotions in social situations. Still, proponents of the somatic marker hypothesis (Damasio, 1994) have continued studying on the assumption that emotions are natural phenomena, naturalising something that is socially constructed (Cole, 1996, Žižek, 2006).

As a consequence, the understanding of animal emotions sustained by this psychological perspective (Panksepp, 2005) would not be enough for the understanding of emotions in the classroom, because of the impossibility of isolating what could be identified as natural in human emotions. A sociocultural approach cannot deny that emotions correspond to bodily changes (James, 1884, p. 190) or representations of the body (Lazarus, 2006) as psychological research has shown. However, sociocultural perspectives have shown that cognitive representations are socially constructed (Cole, 1996; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). Additionally, the fact that emotions are evolutionary resources does not reduce the importance of cultures in the shaping of the emergence and transformation of those resources according to the evidence gathered in this research. On the contrary, the fact that emotions are shaped in social settings makes it necessary to reconsider how evolution and history play together in the definition of human emotions. A very important aspect in this understanding is the pulling to the future that human history offers and which has an important impact on the shaping of emotions, as I have discussed in the analysis of the data.

In relation to philosophical cognitivism, whose partisans underline the role of evaluative judgements of the changes that take place in the body (Griffiths and Scarantino, 2005; Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006; Prinz, 2004a; Prinz, 2004b), a sociocultural approach could offer a similar criticism. Evaluative judgements could be assumed as social constructions, according to the evidence presented in this research, and not something purely physical. Regarding awareness of emotions, motives and relations to the environment, underlined as central to emotions in philosophical cognitivism (Frijda, 1986, 2001; Lazarus, 1991, 2006; Planalp, 1999), cannot, according to the evidence analysed in my study, be isolated from social variability and influence.

Finally, psychological theories of emotions that consider culture and society have argued that there is an influence of culture and society on a basic biological mechanism (Frijda and Mesquita, 1994; Kitayama and Cohen, 2007; Kitayama and Markus, 1994a;

Markus and Kitayama, 1994b; Mesquita and Ellsworth, 2001; Mesquita and Leu, 2007). The data in this research, however, questions the possibility of a split of emotions into two substrates (one physical, one experiential). An all embracing approach, which a sociocultural approach could offer, would support the need to study both aspects together. In the classroom, separating emotions as physiological features regardless of the participation of students and teachers in the pedagogic practices, would be insufficient in relation to what the results suggest.

To sum up, the social aspects of emotions, cannot be separated from the individual mechanisms in which emotions take place. Current psychological approaches strip out emotions down to a natural phenomenon, leaving aside what gives them meaning and sense, which is the complex social life of humans, and which involves not only communication among people, but also the participation in social practices. A sociocultural approach can study emotions as part of practices, in which communication among people is embedded in practice. This is the context in which individual human beings experience life.

### ***Emotions in sociology***

In Chapter 2, I discussed the study of emotions in sociology. In this section, I return to some of the literature presented to ponder what a sociocultural perspective has offered for the study of emotions in the classroom.

Certainly, this research shows that the concept of ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild, 2003a) captures the fact that emotions in the classroom are managed in order to respond to institutional demands. Then, if human beings work out emotions towards the institution (Hochschild, 2003a) and more generally towards the social world (Williams and Bendelow, 1998a), it is necessary to ask what the difference would be between an approach founded in the social construction of emotions and a sociocultural perspective. The analysis of the data presented in this research suggests that the acknowledgement of the social character of individual experience does not cancel the importance of such an experience. Certainly, individual experience has a social origin, as the data analysis above has shown. Indeed, the participation in pedagogic practices in the classroom informs the emergence and transformation of emotions. Nevertheless, an individual’s experience, life experience, occurs from the particular place in which he or she participates in the social practices. In this sense, there is a co-construction of the individual and the social characteristics of emotions. For this reason, a diversity of experiences is lived by individuals. In this way, there is not a full determinism in

relation to the impact of social practice on individual participants. Emotions, as I have argued based on the data, are grounded in the experience of participants' present time, and they constitute an important aspect of the existence of diversity. An individual engages and potentially feels from the specific position in which he or she participates.

The implication of this relative non determination of the social practice over the individual, is that the management of emotions is not unidirectional to accommodate individuals to the institution (the classroom or the school). In point of fact, such a management is actively negotiated in a participatory way with other participants. Such a negotiation is performed, and explicitly or tacitly agreed in the classroom. These processes give way to diversity both among individuals, as well as among localities (classes). Behaviour is then not only adjusted according to the preset institutional feeling rules (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2001; Hochschild, 2003b) in a particular setting, but it is also rebuilt in terms of the local situation, and the diverse ways in which individuals experience the social context in which they participate. By contrast, my research focuses on the way in which emotions function in social practice. I have found evidence that there is something 'spontaneous' and unplanned in emotions, something that even questions institutional rules, as it is the case of adolescent rebelliousness (Engeström, 1996). The fact that emotions emerge and are transformed in the social world does not solve the issue of individual diversity of experience, and this acknowledgement allows us to understand that the social and individual aspects of emotions are co-constructed.

The data analysis points to emotions as part of social practices, in which the transformation of bonds, the creation of closeness or distance, and the transformation or the reaffirmation of the power relations take place. For this reason, rather than using the concept of emotional geographies to map teachers' recollections of emotionally laden interactions (Hargreaves, 2001), geographical maps, based on observation, could be used to depict the relational places between teachers and students, as well as to represent rises and falls in power relationships of the practices observed.

Sociological approaches to the study of emotions, however, leave aside the importance of the biological body, and the complex process of working through emotions. As the data analysed in this research show, emotions are intrinsically linked not only to cultural meanings, but simultaneously to the body as such, and a line between these two substrates could not be easily draw. A sociocultural approach suggests that the future of



research about emotions would need to consider the two aspects, individual and social, together.

### ***A sociocultural study of emotions***

In Vygotsky, I found the foundation for a non dualistic approach that does not separate ‘individual’ and ‘social’ as two independent realms in psychology. With the two previous sections I have shown that two parallel poles coexist in perspectives drawn in dominant psychological and sociological approaches to the study of emotions. The two poles represent neither a unity, nor a history or movement in between them. It is a dialogue in which nobody listens. Vygotsky’s basic point in this sense is to understand emotions in their whole range to explain the emergence of what is ‘higher’ (in complexity) in human emotions without reducing them to the lower, automatic or more mechanical aspects of emotions (Vygotsky, 1999).

Vygotsky’s suggestion of a general psychology as an all-embracing discipline whose objects of study were psychological phenomena in their whole range, i.e. consciousness, unconscious and behaviour, offers the possibility of understanding the complexity of emotions in their wholeness and in their unity. As the evidence presented in this research shows, the disambiguation of emotions is an insoluble problem. An integrated view would have the potential to open a new direction for the study of emotions, which “can decide this controversy between animal and (hu)man in psychology” (Vygotsky, 1997). The decision cannot be reached by tossing a coin. The decision can be solved with an extension of what this research has achieved: a historical analysis of emotions at all levels: microhistorical, ontogenic (with the use of microgenetic analysis), the history of cultures, and human history. The understanding of the development of emotions needs to acknowledge cultural and individual diversity.

Therefore, I have been loyal to Vygotsky’s (1999) emphasis on the need to recover emotions from their isolation and passivity. As the analysis of the data gathered in classrooms shows, emotions represent an active engagement with the world, closely engaged to everyday struggles, which involve intentions. Emotions need to be recognised as alive and vibrant, and in order to capture their nature as grounded in everyday life events. Human emotions, as part of human mind, emerge in the context of joint mediated activities of people (Cole, 1996). In the classroom, we have been able to observe that emotions involve intentional actions, as well as unconscious and tacit elements enacted performatively through movements. Intentions are important, as history has a directionality (Scribner, 1985), and in this sense it is Lamarckian (1914),

i.e. the useful discoveries of one generation are passed directly to the next one. This fact has led Daniels to the assertion that it is pedagogy that makes us human (Daniels, 2001). For this reason culture, and particularly education, has a teleological role, an ensemble of embedded intentions and directions together with the possibility of transcending them (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2008; Engestrom, 1998). The understanding of emotions in the classroom has helped to rethink about adolescence rebelliousness and questioning of the old.

Finally, a sociocultural approach offers a historical approach that can go up to the level of microhistory, which recovers emotions from their a-historicity (Vygotsky, 1999). A historical approach is important to understand the continuity and change involved in the emergence and transformation of emotions in the classroom. In brief, paraphrasing Vygotsky's assertion about art, it is imperative not only to experience the excitement of emotions, but also to explain emotions, and to explain them in such a way that the explanation does not kill emotion (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 254).

## **Findings and implications**

In this section, I discuss the implications for pedagogical practices, for new ways of doing educational research and, more generally, for understanding emotions from a sociocultural perspective.

### ***Implications for pedagogical practices***

In this section, I would like to discuss implications for pedagogic practices. With this aim, I will start by reflecting on an problematic aspect in the current international landscape.

In Mexico and many other countries, the emphasis on testing and results has increased. The importance of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), has greatly contributed to this tendency. With this, the processes of teaching and learning are assumed to be subordinated to the final results of children's formal assessments based on homogeneous tests. In contrast with this tendency, the evidence shown in this study demonstrates the importance of the way in which teachers and students work together, in order to support learning ways of working through their emotions and participating in the classroom (and later in social life), as much as curriculum contents. This achievement involves the creation of the conditions for students, as I pointed in Chapter 9, that can support participation, understanding and strengthening of the acceptance of diversity, and the development of ways of working together and developing values

associated with community building and care. A model based on assessment results intensifies teachers' labour and creates labour conditions in ways that would make the already challenging job of teachers even more difficult.

Furthermore, if even in technical jobs, emotions are part of the way in which people engage and relate to their goals and objectives (Roth, 2007a, 2004, 2006), in a profession where the relationships among people are at the centre, this is even more important. In this thesis, I have shown that when teaching does not engage with emotions and when it does not create an appropriate emotional atmosphere, emotions emerge in ways that put the relations between teachers and students at risk of deterioration. When emotions are accepted and worked through with the support of teachers, teachers and students work together in a collaborative way. In any cases, whether accepting students' actions and emotions or not, teachers teach, either explicitly or implicitly, how to deal with emotions. Eventually this might have an impact on learning, both at the individual level and at the level of the group. For this reason, it would be important to re-think how to create conditions for teachers to support adolescents' development as part of the teaching tasks. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, social and emotional learning programmes (Zins *et al.*, 2007), are built on individualistic views, and fail to support effectively certain aspects which are shown in the analysis of the data and which are vital in relation to living together in contemporary societies.

As a consequence, teacher professional development and teacher learning would need to be supported in relation to emotions so that teachers can contribute to the construction of emotional climates or environments that support participation (Rudduck. and Flutter, 2004) and dialogue in diversity (Hoffman, 2009), as well as the construction of shared values and community building, through an emphasis on a culture of care while working together. This has all sorts of implications not only in terms of labour conditions for teachers, but also in relation to the organisation of schools and other structural conditions.

### ***Further study in educational research***

Although the study of emotions has become increasingly popular, there is not yet enough evidence about what happens to emotions in classrooms. For this reason, first of all further study of emotions in microsituations would be needed. In this line, among other themes, there is a need for sociocultural research to better understand the role of thinking together and working together in the classroom. Research that involved

emotions could be useful with this end. The evidence analysed in this thesis shows the importance of creating an emotional climate through the support of teachers in the zone of proximal development. Additionally, there are other issues that could be studied in relation to emotions in the classroom, such as power and emotions, community building and emotions, collective learning and emotions, and emotions, learning and care.

The approach I built comprises a comprehensive theoretical approach and a methodology to investigate classrooms. I have discussed some of the implications of the former, except for one. The delimitation of microsituations as a unit of analysis has proved to be a useful conceptual tool.

In relation to the use of video, this tool has offered important advantages, particularly intertwined with the sociocultural approach delineated, i.e. video has captured the microhistory of classroom microsituations in detail. This adds to other advantages of video underlined by multimodal research (Bezemer, 2012; Jewitt, 2005; Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2001; Kress, 2006; Somekh, Mavers and Lewin, 2002), such as the use of multimodal transcriptions that include drawings (Bezemer, 2012; Mavers, 2012). The different elements that constitute the transcription allow a detailed depiction of the microsituations under study, with the additional advantage of ensuring the anonymity of the participants in the research. Potentially this resource could also be used to analyse (other) sensitive issues in the classroom.

### ***Further study: understanding emotions***

A sociocultural approach for the study of emotions can help us to understand the way in which a social situation becomes individual experience, and to consider individual experiences as a part of the context in which they emerge, either in the classroom or in the context of other practices. Individual and social are not two parallel realms. On the contrary, as the evidence of my research suggests, although the individual is part of the social, a sense of the situation is built through individuals' experience of it, precisely through their participation in a particular social practice. Thus, the socially situated character of individual experience of emotions contributes simultaneously to the way in which concrete actions become part of the social situation of a particular task, and to the singularity of the experience for the individual. Emotions and their experience are among the resources that individuals have for engaging in the world. A sociocultural approach has the potential to offer a framework for research in other topics in order to avoid the dichotomy individual–social.

Another aspect that could be of interest is the assumption of the possibility of a unity in the investigation of phenomena. In the decades that have passed since Vygotsky died,

the ideal of a unified science has been out of discussion based on the premise that there are as many discursive positions as people engaged in the creation of discursive explanations. In Psychology, the separation of the discipline into different disciplines happened from the beginning (Vygotsky, 1997, 1999). The ideal of a unique discipline with one object of study was lost. In current psychology, we still have a similar problem: several disciplines that develop separately, with theorists working on similar parameters and having as interlocutors their own colleagues. This fact is understandable, as even the object of study of the discipline is different, as in the case of psychoanalysis and cognitive psychology. However, any of those positions enters in what Vygotsky could characterise (cfr. Chapter 3) as one side of a Cartesian dichotomy.

The sociocultural approach I have delineated in this work goes beyond the study of emotions both in an isolated individual way and in a social way that blurs the way in which the individual 'functions' in and as a part of the social world. Far from being an individual issue or a social issue, emotions are simultaneously 'individual' and 'social'. The complexity of bearing this in mind while investigating emotions is what has become my interest, and I contribute to understanding the complexity of the issues involved in this issue.

The premise of the unity, however, is not usual in contemporary social science or in psychology. From the perspective of the social sciences, natural sciences have been bracketed as social constructions, but their discourse continues being taken as reporting something whose existence is obvious<sup>29</sup>. I consider that to resort to critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008) would help to build a foundation for critical judgement in search of a dialogue with other disciplines. After all, dialogue and the construction of a unity in diversity constitute an ideal (a political ideal) in terms of society. Currently, however, in terms of the strong paradigms in which scientific approaches are built, dialogue seems almost imposible in relation to science. To put together the social characters of consciousness and the relation between consciousness and emotions seems to be the way forward for an integrated understanding of humans, i.e. via a unity between what we identify as social and natural sciences nowadays.

## **Limitations of my research**

I have discussed some of the methodological limitations in chapter 5. In this section I will only address two limitations. The first one is the way in which I have characterised sociology and psychology. In search of emotions as the object of study, I have lost the

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<sup>29</sup> This happens precisely

different analytic objectives and foundations that lead the two disciplines, sociology and psychology. One is oriented to the understanding of social relations (its production, reproduction and transformation) and the other one, to the understanding of universal attributes common to all human beings. This could not be saved, I think, as my invitation to both disciplines was that we might be able to work together if we could find the way of defining a common problem that satisfied the needs and focus of both disciplines, under the umbrella of a sociocultural perspective.

The second limitation of my work is linked to the first one, and it is the ideal of breaking dichotomies in the study of emotions through the creation of one unified psychology which included the laboratory-based psychology together with a narrative psychology (Wundt, 1989). When I engaged in this work I thought that it was possible to build a unified psychology. I thought so, in spite of having read, for example, Michael Cole's (1996) realistic evaluation about psychology. He underlines that the dominant discipline is so well established to it would be almost impossible to work for a change in approach that would imply rebuilding its foundations from the onset (which was Vygotsky's, 1997 aim). Such a discipline seems quite unrealistic, and following Cole's example, I finally called my approach a "sociocultural psychology" (while he called it simply "cultural psychology").

Although I set the grounds for engaging in discussions among researchers in the field of emotions with a comprehensive approach, however, my research deals only with the study of emotions in classrooms. The grounds established might constitute only an attempt to the delineation of the whole problem of dealing with human emotions. The big question here is if other perspectives would be willing to engage in a dialogue in the future.

### **A personal final note**

Thank you to the reader for coming to this place. Maybe it is better if you do not start by reading this thesis here, in case you are the kind of reader that enjoys skipping to the final page. This little bit is a personal reflection, not an academic text, so please read it at your own risk.

I am such an adventurer that the process of my PhD was a long quest. Although at some point, I felt like a Penelope, weaving and un-weaving an eternal thesis, waiting for something that did not come back, most of the time, the journey was an Odyssey. An Odyssey, not only for its length, but also for its intensity. Common wisdom, available to the old ones in my family, stresses the importance of the journey over the final port.

Maybe, as I am becoming one of them, I followed their approach. Day after day, each day at a time, I lived my PhD with open heart and open mind. However in the journey, I almost drowned. Very often, I felt lost and ‘she is doing a PhD’ became almost a joke. I was a bunch of promises that were not kept. For my young nieces and nephews, I have always been a PhD student. For me, unfortunately, and maybe fortunately, the PhD was an investment of a good part of my adult life. The PhD became some sort of a life project. I could not follow my first supervisor’s wise advice. Wisdom, wisdoms.

During the process, many feelings emerged: ambition, fear, enjoyment, anger, pride, resignation, excitement, loss of hope, passion for life. A roller coaster that I embraced alone, but I was never lonely. I have shared lots of this with my fellow colleagues in six-‘o’-four and lately in five-four-five. I also had my friends, and my new families. Beautiful people all around.

Being a foreigner, an outsider, a migrant, a border crosser, redefined my identity. Eventually, I could build independence and greater self awareness. I learned the difficulty I had to put in writing the hunches that were so clearly there for many years. I had to learn to spell things out. Spell, like magic charm, is what my writing seems. Gosh, but it is always so difficult to start. I wrote more than double what I finally deliver here. Sometimes Will suggested things like “start here, on page 21”. My ‘first draft’ as loose and wobbly as it was, had in its germ the ideas that you hopefully have read here.

I also have felt ashamed of not growing to the level I expected to push myself. My chosen topic and my approach were not easy to embrace. Was I capable of dealing with ‘big questions’, did I have the creativity?, the strength?, even the critical thinking required for the task? I learned to hold myself, and keep on going in spite of all the odds. Nobody has an easy journey, an easy life. Finally, great things have come my way.

Education opens possibilities and I learnt a lot in this long process. There is actually never a way back. But it is very important to look back and learn and move forward. And look back, and learn from the possibilities of the past. And then look forward, and live the present time.



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